PLAY METER Magazine

VOLUME 23, No. 11 FOR THE COIN-OP ENTERTAINMENT/FEC INDUSTRY OCTOBER 1997

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AMOA SHOW ISSUE

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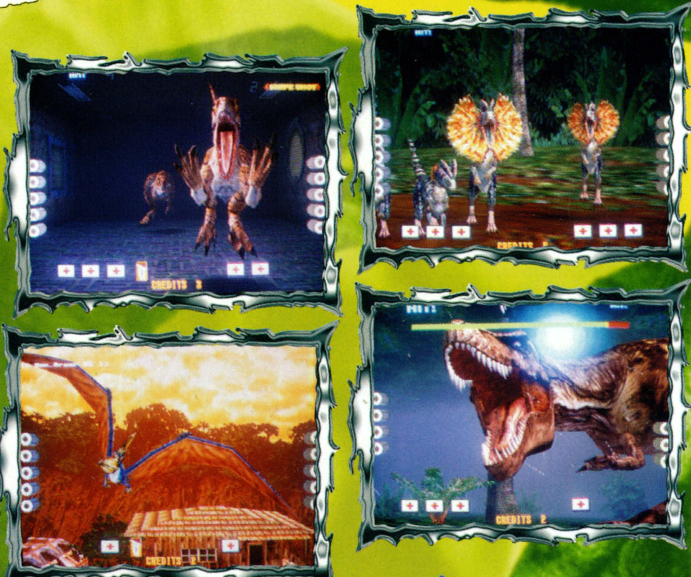
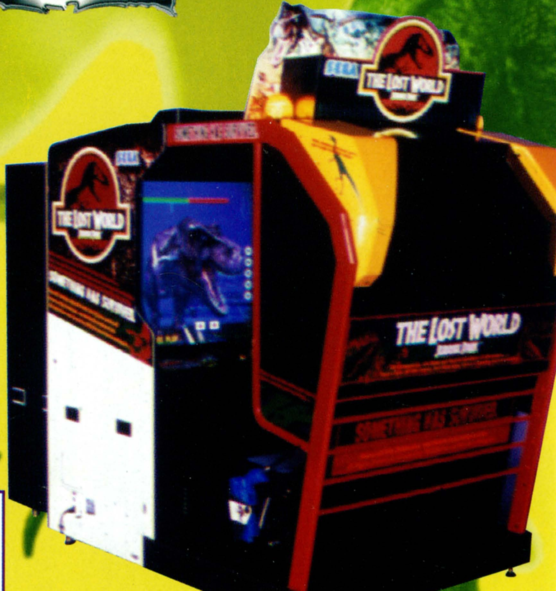


Los Angeles arcade earned $1,447.50 the first 7 days. Another Southern California arcade reported $1,888.75 for one week of operation! Can you survive this?



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News BULLETIN

CONFUSION CONTINUES OVER MICROSOFT

Recent confusion over Microsoft's continued role in the coin-op amusement industry remained unresolved at press time despite signs that the software giant will continue to play a significant role in the development of PC-based arcade games. The company plans to exhibit at AMOA International Expo this month in Atlanta.

Microsoft's point man on the coin-op initiative Jason Robar contacted Play Meter last month to discuss clarification of "some rumors" that had been circulated about the company's plans and him personally. He did not elaborate on any the latter. However, another company official, Ted Hossie, said Robar had been removed from his position overseeing the arcade initiative, although he did not say why.

"Jason Robar has nothing to do with Public PC," Hossie told Play Meter, adding that anything Robar said did not reflect "Microsoft's position."

Robar's complaints centered around ongoing misconceptions about the role Microsoft would play in the arcade industry. According to him, operators were wrongly looking to Microsoft for the production of game cabinets and systems. "Our product is Windows," he said. "I don't think our position was too clear. Because we were Microsoft, people didn't listen to us. Our job is not to pick one particular manufacturer and make that manufacturere successful. We are willing to work with anyone." An official company statement promised by Robar was not released, and Robar did not respond to a follow request for clarification.

Microsoft is also still reportedly working out details with ardware manufacturer Intel Corp. on specific plans for the rcade initiative before signing on as a member of the Open Arcade Architecture Forum, a group sponsored by Intel to foster working relationships between companies looking to bring games to market. Some critics of Intel have said the chip maker is trying to push an expensive, high-end platform that is not necessary to operate games profitably.

Fortunately, industry members will be able to address all the issues regarding the PC arcade initiative at AMOA Expo this month during two seminars being sponsored by Intel and Microsoft respectively.

NAMCO DEFENDS AMOA DECISION

Namco's decision not to exhibit at AMOA was purely economical, according to company president Kevin Hayes, who dismissed theories that the move was a slight against the operator's association. "That's absolute nonsense," Hayes told Play Meter. "We are not going because it's not a good value."

Hayes went on to say that Namco would continue to look at cutting back resources spent to exhibit at trade shows. "We should probably drop two shows," he said, adding that AMOA's scheduling and placement so close to IAAPA did make the "decision easier. But we are not committed to AMOA for next year either."

At press time, Namco was also continuing to sell *Tekken 3* kits as part of a package deal that included 15 of the fighting games along with four *Speed Up* driving simulators. Vice president of sales Frank Cosentino said the company was previously selling both kits and the packages. "Right now all we have are the packages," he said. "There will be more *Tekken 3* kits available. It's certainly not something that has been a problem."

"We have had a surprising demand for the games and they have done better than any of the other *Tekken* games," added Hayes. Namco held a distributor gathering last month in Chicago to give a sneak preview of two new deluxe games, as well as the completed version of the horse racing simulator *Final Furlong* with English voice overs and graphics.

PLUS SALES OFFERS XTREME VOODOO

Steve Walton of Plus Sales recently announced the introduction of Xtreme Voodoo, a motion simulator game developed by Stricor of Atlanta, Ga. It features three wrap around 27-inch monitors and can be operated without an attendant. The game only requires a space of seven feet by nine feet and is powered by a PC with three graphics accelerators. Greater Southern and Brady Distributing have been appointed to market the product in the southeastern region of the United States. For more information, contact Walton, (770)631-3923, or Stricor, (770)447-1670.

DAVE & BUSTER'S OPENS IN CINCINNATI TO RECORD SALES

Dave & Buster's grand opening in Cincinnati, Ohio, last month was spotlighted by the highest first Saturday night sales in the company's 15-year history. "We are thrilled with the company's response to the opening of our new store in Cincinnati," said co-founder and co-CEO Buster Corley. "Our new staff in Cincinnati proved to be terrific, and, as we expand, our management and opening team just continue to deliver."

UPDATE ON CCI

Last month in the "News Bulletin" we reported on the closure of Coin Concepts Inc., the New Jersey-based manufacturer of redemption and novelty games, and the fact that Bay Tek (920-822-3951) would continue on with service and parts support for all CCI games. For those interested in the *Hitter's Rally* game that was a joint effort between CCI and Seidel Amusement Machine Co., rest assured that Seidel (505-821-6878) is continuing to produce the game.

CCI founder and president Art Warner is now controller for a manufacturing company in New Jersey and CCI vice president of sales Gary Warner has just embarked on a new career in the computer field selling business application software to Fortune 500 companies. Gary tells us that both he and Art "miss the industry and the friends we made along the way."

CENTURY CLUB MEETING

The next gathering of the Century Club will be in Atlanta, Ga., during AMOA International Expo '97, Fri., Oct. 24. All industry members with 25 years or more of coin-op experience are invited. The meeting is set for 3:00 p.m. on Level 3, East Concourse, in the Georgia World Congress Center. Sponsors are needed for this meeting and one set for ASI in March 1998. If attending, please contact Steve Kordek at Williams-Bally/Midway, 3401 N. California Ave., Chicago, IL 60618; (773)961-1548; fax (773)961-1010.

PAPA IS BACK!

Pinball guru Steve Epstein says to mark your calendars for Feb. 5-8, 1998, when the Professional and Amateur Pinball Championships will resume at the Sahara Hotel in Las Vegas, Nev. This PAPA 6 will be co-sponsored by GoGo Worldwide Vacations and the Sahara Hotel & Casino, and supported by pinball manufacturers WMS Industries and Sega Pinball. Epstein calls PAPA 6 "the most fun pinball gathering ever."

ASTRO AND SPIRIT JOIN FORCES

Astro Distributing and Spirit Design Group have signed an exclusive North and South American marketing agreement whereby both companies will handle sales of the Viper X1 enclosed cockpit flight simulator (see "What's New" this month for product details). Astro's subsidiary Ortsa Mfg. will build the Viper X1 in Rock Island, Ill. In other Astro news, the company is set to debut its new *Bowlerama,* a self-contained redemption game for North and South America and Canada distribution. Look for more on *Bowlerama* next month.

INTERNATIONAL SCENE

▼Lou Rudolph of Merit Industries filed a report on the Asian Amusement and International Theme Park Expo '97 held recently in Singapore. The show is a combined effort between AAMA, IAAPA, and the AIC group in Singapore. Said Rudolph, "We merged our AAMA-IAAPA show that had been in Hong Kong for the past three years (called the Asian Amusement Expo) with the International Parks and Attractions show that had been in Singapore for three years. The goal was to bring the strengths of both organizations together to create one big show. The two groups will alternate management of the show; this year AIC and next year AAMA. The show will be in Singapore in 1998 and the plan is to eventually have the show move around the region to give us the best coverage. For recognition purposes the name will revert back to the Asian Amusement Expo in 1998."

Booth space grew from 210 booths last year to 390 this time around. A total of 3,400 buyers attended from 34 countries, according to statistics provided by IAAPA. They came for educational workshops and exhibited products from coin-op companies such as Bay Tek, Bob's Space Racers, ICE, Lazer-Tron, Merit, Rock-Ola, Rowe, Skee-Ball, Williams, and Valley. A large contingent of attendees came from India, which is a result of the spring show there and continued marketing by AAMA direct and through the Embassy, said Rudolph.

Added Rudolph, "The overall opinion was that it was an excellent show with good quality people. All the coin-op companies were very happy and expect to see growth in the market and growth in the show for next year. This could grow to become the largest coin-op show in Southeast Asia." (For photos and more on the show, turn to "Eye on Asia," pg. 64).

SNK INTRODUCES HYPER NEO GEO 64

SNK executives traveled to Japan during last month's JAMMA show with three of its top distributors to preview the new video game system. For details on the company's new marketing team and product, turn to p. 148. At the JAMMA show, top, (l-r): V.P. Administration, Mr. Tanaka, and John Barone of SNK, Jo Brady of Brady Distributing, Peter Betti of H. Betti Industries, and Tim Jackson of SNK. Bottom, (l-r): Jerry Marcus of Atlas Distributing, Jackson, Brady, Betti, and Barone.

BITS AND PIECES

☛ James Industries South has filed a lawsuit against forme president Aldo Andreu and his new game and part distribu firm Andreu International for alleged conversion of funds, fice equipment, and business records, as well as alleged vio tion of non-compete agreements, breach of fiduciary duty, an "torturous interference with business relations," according t James South partner John Blouin. Andreu countered the allegations by saying they were untrue and that his attempts to leav the company have been well known in the industry. James' announcement of the suit was "yet another unbelievable attempt to keep the separation from taking place, according to Andreu who plans to make an official statement on the matter at a late date. James South has recently relocated to 9126 NW 123r St., Hialeah Gardens, FL 33016; (305)820-7070; fa (305)824-0610.

☛ Valley recently announced a number or restructurin moves including the departure of Mark Schiller as presiden who leaves the company to pursue other interests, according t chairman and CEO Dick Shelton. Several changes have als been made in the company's sales force. *Look for more on thi in the next issue of Play Meter.* ▲

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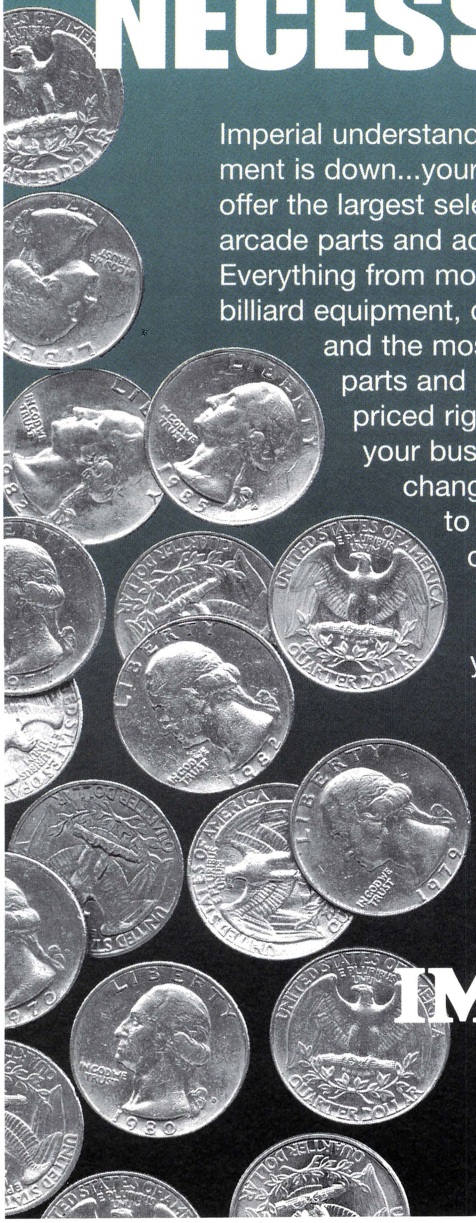

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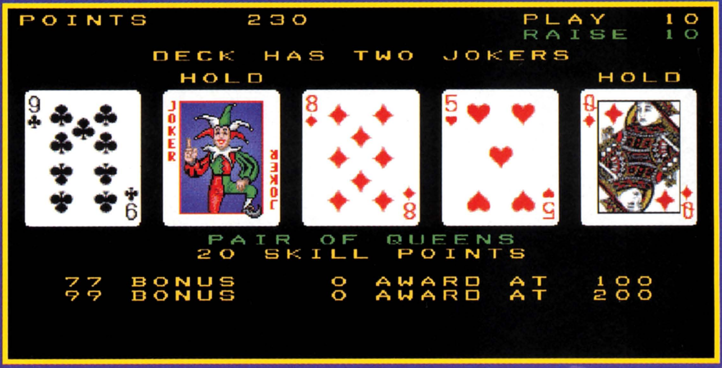

```
POINTS          230                 PLAY    10
                                    RAISE   10
             DECK HAS TWO JOKERS
      HOLD                            HOLD
              PAIR OF QUEENS
             20 SKILL POINTS
   77 BONUS         0 AWARD AT    100
   99 BONUS         0 AWARD AT    200
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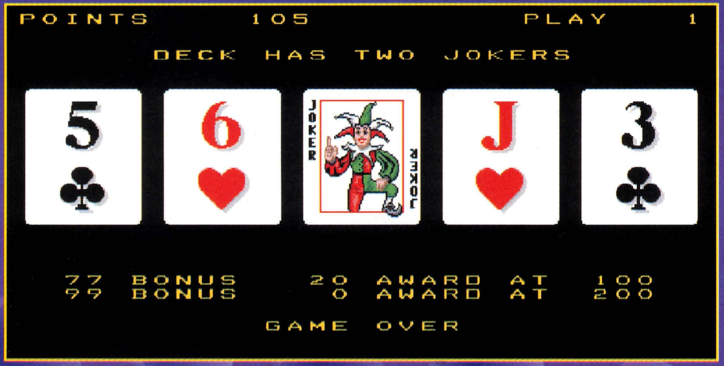
- ♠ Player May Choose From 4 Types of Cards



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POINTS          105                 PLAY     1
             DECK HAS TWO JOKERS
   77 BONUS        20 AWARD AT    100
   99 BONUS         0 AWARD AT    200
                 GAME OVER
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Williams Electronics Games and Midway Games have dedicated their efforts to addressing the special needs of street operators with a product lineup that includes the sports-themed video *NFL Blitz* and fighting-themed *Mortal Kombat 4* (with the new Zeuss chip), *Off Road Challenge* simulator, *Touchmaster* multigame countertop, and *Medieval Madness* pinball. Whether the location is a bowling center, tavern, FEC, stand-alone arcade, or family restaurant, there is something to please everyone. The American company responsible for such legendary games as the original *Mortal Kombat* and *The Addams Family* continues to create viable street-savvy titles with the intent of extended life in the field.

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FROM THE **EDITOR**

Looking at technology and emotional needs

I was reading a book, but halfway listening to the TV, when my ears perked up. I heard a startling, yet revealing statement from a Microsoft employee being interviewed about Bill Gates' palatial mansion rumored to have cost $25 million. He said that technology is always changing but man's emotional needs don't.

Although it struck me as profound, I don't think I fully understood what he meant until I started thumbing through an old "Life" magazine from 1949 I had picked up at the Milwaukee airport a few years ago. While my original thought was that it would be revealing to see some of the stories that were in the news the year I was born, it was the ads that would catch my eye.

Valerie Cognevich
Editor

It was these ads that would put meaning to the statement about emotional needs. After seeing some of the ads, it hit me that what we want is relatively the same; it's how we satisfy those wants that changes. Let me cite several examples:

"Watch the Fords Go By and Watch the Buyers Go For That New Ford Feel." That's from 1949, but how about this one from 1997: "Meet Chevy Venture, the New Mini Van with a Great Sense of Adventure."

A couple more: From 1949, "Choose Chevrolet, the One Car with These Extra Values: Valve-in-Head Engine, Fisher Body, Certi-Safe Hydraulic Brakes, Curved Windshield With Panoramic Visibility, and Low-Pressure Tires." From 1997, "The Mercury Villager With Seven Windows, Rear Seat Cup Holders, Independent Heating and Air Conditioning Controls, Four Captain's Chairs, All Window Solar Tint Glass, Integrated Child Restraint Seats, and a Rear Sliding Seat."

From 1949: "The Big Rugged Dodge, Just a Few Dollars More Than the Lowest Priced Cars;" "Plymouth, the Car that Likes to be Compared;" "It's Smarter to Own a Mercury;" "Nash with Hydra-Matic Drive and Airflyte Construction;" and "Rent a New Car From Hertz and Drive It Yourself."

From 1997: "Pack Up the School Bus and Go Camping in the Mazda MPV All Sport;" "Chances Are Their Teeth Will Need More Work Than Your Lumina;" "Plymouth Voyager for the Active Family;" "The All-New Regal, Official Car of the Supercharged Family;" and "Talk About High Standards, The Ford Taurus."

While automobiles and their features have eclipsed advertising ever since there was advertising and since there were cars, other subjects dominated ads in 1949. One was alcohol. There were more ads for liquor and beer than just about any other products, except of course cars and related things like oil and batteries. These examples might surprise you because they were appealing to people's sense of well-being. "Whoever You Are (in Store or Bar) It's Smart to Switch to Calvert Whiskey;" "Have You A Friendly Face? Double Your Enjoyment! Ask For This Double Rich Kentucky Whiskey Today;" "Now I Know Why Schlitz is The Beer That Made Milwaukee Famous;" "When Day is Done, You Deserve Schenley Whiskey;" "Beer Belongs, Enjoy It."

That's certainly a radical departure from ads today concerning alcohol, and cigarettes too! But we're still trying to fill that emotional need with our health. In 1949 you saw "Stepping Out, Don't take Along Acid Indigestion;" "Foley's Starts Intestinal Tract Moving Again;" and "Bufferin Acts Twice As Fast As Aspirin;" In 1997 we saw "When My Arthritis Pain Acts Up I Go Right For My Advil;" "Bayer is the Only Leading Pain Reliever That Can Save Your Life;" and "Ask Your Doctor About Flonase, It Keeps Your Nasal Allergies In Check."

And, of course, advertisers have appealed to women's sense of beauty with ads like these: From 1949, "Blondes, Give Your Hair Extra Lightness-Shine," and from 1997, "You Have Nothing To Lose But The Gray."

As I look over these examples of the emotional needs that manufacturers have been appealing to for half a century, it's revealing when we understand that we aren't embracing technology for technology's sake. It's only a tool we use to appeal to basic emotional needs. For us in the coin machine industry, the emotional trigger is entertainment and fun. My two young nieces were at my house for the weekend. Since I don't have young children, toys were non-existent. But two egg cartons became caterpillars, purses, houses, and vehicles. They had fun like most of us did when we were thrilled to test our imaginations with the new refrigerator box that became a house, a fort, or an 18-wheel truck.

We can't lose sight of the emotional needs we are trying to fill with our products. People want to be entertained, they want social interaction, and they want to feel that they can find these things in the equipment we provide. Now how could we put a bill acceptor on a refrigerator box? ▲

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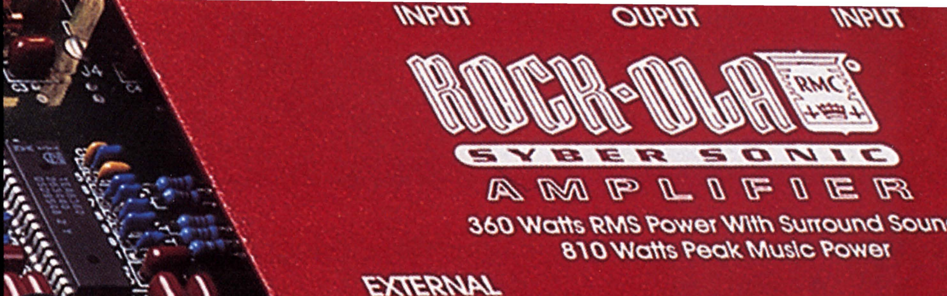
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VIDEO KITS

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1. Golden Tee '97 *(Incred. Tech.)*	8.38	161
2. Tekken 3 *(Namco)*	8.32	272
3. Area 51 *(Atari)*	7.81	1160
4. Police Trainer *(P&P)*	7.76	255
5. Golden Tee 3D Golf *(Incred. Tech)*	7.66	1040
6. Marvel Heroes vs SF *(Capcom)*	7.16	28
7. Tournament Solitaire *(Dynamo)*	7.00	572
8. Die Hard Arcade *(Sega)*	6.93	395
9. Tekken 2 *(Namco)*	6.86	1019
10. Point Blank *(Namco)*	6.57	606
11. X-Men vs. Street Fighter *(Capcom)*	6.48	291
12. Mace: Dark Age *(Atari)*	6.29	437
13. Lethal Enforcers *(Konami)*	6.16	1618
14. Raiden Fighters *(Fabtek)*	6.16	87
15. Bust-A-Move Again *(Taito)*	6.09	474
16. Strikers 1945 *(Worldwide)*	6.08	150
17. Bust-A-Move *(SNK)*	6.07	483
18. Metal Slug *(SNK)*	6.06	418
19. World Class Bowling *(Incredible Tech.)*	6.04	307
20. Arkanoid Returns *(Midwest)*	6.00	*
21. Great 1000 Mile Rally 2 *(Kaneko)*	5.94	44
22. King of Fighters '97 *(SNK)*	5.90	*
23. Fighting Vipers *(Sega)*	5.89	145
24. Street Fighter EX *(Capcom)*	5.88	2
25. Marvel Super Heroes *(Capcom)*	5.86	382
26. Three *(Capcom)*	5.81	83
27. Raiden DX *(Fabtek)*	5.77	346
28. Tekken *(Namco)*	5.76	791
29. Aero Fighters 3 *(SNK)*	5.65	65
30. Super Puzzle Fighter II *(Capcom)*	5.63	53

COUNTERTOPS

1. Megatouch XL *(Merit)*	8.64	286
2. Megatouch IV *(Merit)*	7.84	886
3. Megatouch Tournament *(Merit)*	7.69	481
4. Touchmaster *(Williams)*	7.59	487
5. Magical Touch 3 *(Micro)*	6.75	61
6. Megatouch *(Merit)*	6.68	913
7. Magical Touch *(Micro)*	6.57	531

CLASSIC VIDEOS

1. Out Run *(Sega)*	6.31	51
2. Ms. Pac-Man *(Bally/Midway)*	6.20	*
3. Pole Position *(Atari)*	6.16	*
4. Galaga *(Bally/Midway)*	6.10	*
5. Centipede *(Atari)*	5.96	*
6. Raiden *(Fabtek)*	5.43	*

VIDEO DEDICATED

GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1. House of the Dead *(Sega)*	9.05	178
2. Maximum Force *(Atari)*	8.05	252
3. Tourn. 3D Golf *(In. Tech.)*	8.05	336
4. Gun Blade NY *(Sega)*	7.74	598
5. Solitaire Challenge *(Dynamo)*	7.26	1386
6. Virtua Cop 2 *(Sega)*	7.25	850
7. Time Crisis *(Namco)*	7.22	858
8. Virtua Fighter 3 *(Sega)*	7.11	154
9. Virtual On *(Sega)*	6.41	129
10. Rampage World Tour *(Midway)*	6.40	76
11. Virtua Fighter 2 *(Sega)*	5.97	930
12. Run and Gun 2 *(Konami)*	5.64	72
13. Killer Instinct 2 *(Midway)*	5.44	305

VIDEO SIMULATORS

1. Top Skater *(Sega)*	9.20	118
2. Cruis'n World *(Midway)*	9.12	534
3. Daytona USA Limited *(Sega)*	8.73	99
4. Sega Super GT *(Sega)*	8.54	111
5. San Francisco Rush *(Atari)*	8.54	462
6. Cruis'n USA *(Midway)*	8.13	1994
7. Daytona USA *(Sega)*	8.11	2138
8. Alpine Racer 2 *(Namco)*	8.09	369
9. Wave Runner *(Sega)*	8.00	316
10. Sega Rally *(Sega)*	7.55	788
11. Alpine Racer *(Namco)*	7.52	1107
12. Manx TT *(Sega)*	7.24	563
13. Aqua Jet *(Namco)*	7.13	343
14. Indy 500 Twin *(Sega)*	7.00	497
15. Pitcher's Duel *(ICE)*	6.71	17
16. Suzuka 8 Hours 2 *(Namco)*	6.70	1505
17. OutRunners *(Sega)*	6.70	1774
18. Cyber Cycles *(Namco)*	6.65	888
19. Winding Heat *(Konami)*	6.57	152
20. Home Run Derby *(ICE)*	6.53	163
21. Tokyo Wars *(Namco)*	6.42	204
22. Alpine Surfer *(Namco)*	6.29	375
23. Lucky & Wild *(Namco)*	6.20	1346

PINBALLS

1. Medieval Madness *(Williams)*	8.19	51
2. Attack From Mars *(Bally)*	7.76	884
3. Scared Stiff *(Bally)*	7.47	516
4. The Addams Family *(Bally)*	7.44	3337
5. Theatre of Magic *(Bally)*	7.15	1198
6. Star Wars Trilogy *(Sega)*	6.96	149
7. The Lost World *(Sega)*	6.73	39
8. Junk Yard *(Williams)*	6.57	248
9. Star Trek: TNG *(Williams)*	6.49	1695
10. Independence Day *(Sega)*	6.44	233
11. Arabian Nights *(Williams)*	6.44	460
12. World Cup Soccer *(Bally)*	6.39	1055
13. Pinball Magic *(Capcom)*	6.38	211
14. Space Jam *(Sega)*	6.18	130
15. Fast Break *(Bally)*	6.15	48

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REDEMPTION

ALLEY BOWLERS

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Skee-Ball Too! *(Skee-Ball)*	8.00	355
2.	Basket Fever *(Bay Tek)*	7.86	52
3.	Bug Bash *(Bay Tek)*	7.38	478
4.	Skee-Ball Lightning *(Skee-Ball)*	7.00	857
5.	Skee-Ball *(Skee-Ball)*	6.89	630

SPORTS GAMES

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Super Shot *(Skee-Ball)*	7.00	576
2.	Shoot to Win *(Smart)*	6.90	508
3.	Hoop It Up *(Atari)*	6.59	857
4.	Full Court Fever *(ICE)*	6.40	579
5.	Full Court Frenzy *(ICE)*	6.23	351
6.	Hoop Shot *(ICE)*	6.11	155
7.	Rage in the Cage *(Fun Merchants)*	6.11	279
8.	UB-QB Football *(Skee-Ball)*	5.84	112
9.	Slugfest *(Williams)*	5.28	5
10.	Around the World *(UETD)*	5.20	181
11.	Putting Challenge II *(G.L. Tech.)*	5.00	51

SINGLE CRANES

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Rainbow *(Rainbow)*	7.82	742
2.	Big Choice *(Fun Merchants)*	7.00	614
3.	Clean Sweep *(Smart)*	7.00	800
4.	Classic Watch Crane *(Smart)*	6.89	557
5.	Showcase *(Smart)*	6.88	32
6.	Jumbo Crane *(Grayhound)*	6.83	626
7.	Candy Crane *(Smart)*	6.65	422
8.	Hollywood Crane *(Maxwell)*	6.33	93
9.	Skill Crane *(Grayhound)*	5.89	330
10.	Pit Stop *(Smart)*	5.56	123

CHILD-SIZE GAMES

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Hightops *(Skee-Ball)*	6.80	88
2.	Toss Em *(UETD)*	6.60	204
3.	Shoot To Win! Jr. *(Smart)*	6.44	541
4.	Feed Big Bertha *(Smart)*	6.32	276
5.	Mini Dunx *(ICE)*	6.14	80
6.	The Flintstones *(ICE)*	6.14	83
7.	Smart Toss Em *(Smart)*	5.67	449
8.	Bozo Basketball *(Design Plus)*	5.33	60
9.	Skee-Toss B.C. *(Skee-Ball)*	5.33	6
10.	Godzilla Wars Jr. *(Namco)*	5.00	96

ROLL DOWNS

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Spin To Win *(Lazer-Tron)*	7.11	713
2.	Spin-a-21 *(Lazer-Tron)*	7.00	150
3.	Jungle Rama *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.73	285
4.	Clown Roll Down *(Bay Tek)*	6.13	156
5.	Jungle Picnic *(Bay Tek)*	5.86	*
6.	Roll Down *(Bay Tek)*	5.78	82
7.	Rock N Roll *(Bay Tek)*	5.50	24

NOVELTY

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Cyclone *(ICE)*	9.25	1282
2.	Surfin' Safari *(5 Star)*	8.83	119
3.	Cyclone Jr. *(ICE)*	8.67	621
4.	Treasure Falls *(Planet Earth)*	8.53	620
5.	Dinoscore *(Planet Earth)*	8.10	1093
6.	Prize Zone *(Lazer-Tron)*	7.83	105
7.	Colorama *(Bromley)*	7.82	898
8.	Round 'n Round *(Astro)*	7.30	701
9.	Solar Spin *(Lazer-Tron)*	7.22	400
10.	Bouncing Bandits *(CCI)*	5.86	102
11.	Steer Crazy *(Fun Industries)*	5.83	65
12.	Pop-A-Ball *(Coastal)*	5.78	84
13.	Cosmo Gang *(Data East)*	5.64	2
14.	Pop-A-Slot *(Coastal)*	5.50	302
15.	Buddy Bear *(Smart)*	5.33	167
16.	Flip N Win *(Planet Earth)*	5.29	341
17.	Hop-A-Tic-Tac-Toe *(Data East)*	5.21	34
18.	Simple Simon *(Am. Sammy)*	5.20	90
19.	Killer T-Rex *(Smart)*	5.13	169
20.	Dump the Ump *(ICE)*	5.00	78

COIN DROP GAMES

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Big Haul *(Benchmark)*	8.58	579
2.	Smokin' Token *(Seidel)*	7.93	1046
3.	Wheel 'M In *(Bromley)*	7.41	1002
4.	Super Wheel 'Em In *(Bromley)*	6.86	181
5.	Goin' Rollin' *(Seidel)*	6.78	750
6.	Super Rock-N-Bowl *(Bromley)*	6.71	176
7.	Pirate's Gold *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.60	236
8.	Wheel of Fortune *(Fun House)*	6.44	401
9.	Cut the Cheese *(Sega)*	6.43	466
10.	The Mask *(Data East)*	6.40	635
11.	Roll For Gold *(Benchmark)*	6.31	343
12.	Addams Family Values *(Midway)*	6.21	226
13.	Sega Sports *(Sega)*	6.17	192
14.	Rock-N-Bowl *(Bromley)*	6.13	408

GUN GAMES

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Miner's Revenge *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.60	174
2.	Water Game *(Bob's Space Racers)*	6.50	178
3.	Big Mouth *(Meltec)*	6.25	115
4.	Six Gun Saloon *(CCI)*	6.17	30
5.	Ghosthunter *(Hanaho Games)*	5.80	35
6.	Knock-Down *(Meltec)*	5.40	95
7.	Boom Ball *(Meltec)*	5.33	13

BOPPING/STOMPING GAMES

	GAME	POINT VALUE	LONGEVITY POINTS
1.	Spider Stompin' *(Island)*	7.44	860
2.	Spider Splattin' *(Island)*	7.20	55
3.	Swamp Stomp *(Lazer-Tron)*	7.14	499
4.	Wacky Gator *(Data East)*	6.78	339
5.	Ribbit Racin *(Lazer-Tron)*	6.57	686
6.	Whac-A-Mole *(Bob's Space Racers)*	6.31	108
7.	Cracky Crab *(Namco)*	5.71	147

Results are based on monthly Equipment Poll ballot returns. Point Value = average of ballot ratings on a scale of 1-10; Longevity Points = standings on Best 60 combined game lists (#1 game receives 60 points, #2 game receives 59 points, etc.) **Indicates new or reappearing games.*

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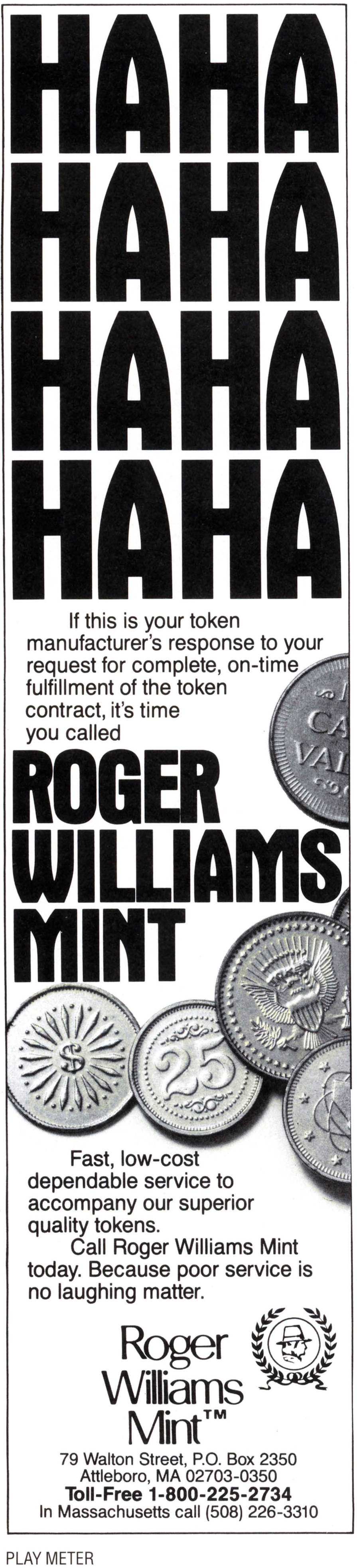

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UP FRONT

One word says it all:

CONSOLIDATION

A New Orleans personal injury attorney who advertises frequently on TV has a slogan that goes, "One call does it all." While his crass commercials send shivers up the spines of many of his colleagues in the profession, his direct and aggressive approach has made him a household name. His slogan, combined with recent conversations with industry veterans, has brought me to one word that tells the story of today's market: consolidation.

The closure of redemption game manufacturer Coin Concepts Inc. is yet another indication of the uphill battle the industry now faces. There is still a glut of redemption equipment on the market, and when manufacturers of the equipment speak freely they say distribution does not give them any support. A common sentiment is, "If an operator places an order for a redemption piece the distributor will oblige but does not encourage or suggest redemption equipment to customers."

I wonder if the lack of interest in redemption can be attributed to the demands of keeping up with inventory. From what I hear, that may be part of it. Another part is not being able to deviate from the "plug 'em in and collect 'em weekly" syndrome. Percentaging games, ordering and handling tickets, plus choosing and tracking prize merchandise may be too much of a change. Yet those who have redemption swear by it.

Not only are the ranks of manufacturers decreasing, one state association that has experienced a drop in membership (who hasn't?) indicated that the number of machines within the state has remained the same although the number of operating companies dropped. Obviously, larger operators are buying out smaller operators more often than we think. "We need to see more of this consolidation for the industry to get healthy again," said one industry member.

The head of a company that specializes in security devices such as locks, hasps, and alarms mentioned a recent mailing to operators that brought back a large amount of non-deliverable mail because the companies no longer existed. Not a good sign. Demand for these products is not what it used to be. "No wonder they don't need locks," he said, "they are either no longer in business or they are no longer buying any new games."

Before we get out the crying towel, consider the story of a man who got into this industry with a string of bulk vending machines that dispensed peppermint patties. He moved up to spiral gumball machines and kinetic-style machines. He did extensive research before jumping in and did not have any preconceived ideas about the best locations or the most appropriate locations; he just went in cold to all types of locations where he succeeded in placing machines and now has a thriving business. He also gets requests for other types of amusement equipment because locations are happy with his service on the vending units. If he can enter on the vending side, what is to prevent traditional music and game operators from adding vending in their existing locations?

Opportunities are there, consolidation or not. Look at other types of equipment to suit different niche markets, such as the four- to 11-year-old crowd. Interactive vending units highlighted in this issue target that market. To use another TV commercial slogan, "Master the possibilities." A downturn in business need not master you. ▲

Bonnie Theard
Managing Editor

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Two letters from one astute reader

Who needs Microsoft and Intel?

Nothing in recent memory has screamed MISTAKE like the teaming up with Microsoft and Intel that the game industry is thinking about. Several reasons for walking away from Microsoft have already been given by others, but I think there is one big reason Microsoft wants into our industry: the take-over of the home game market.

If Microsoft can get enough suckers to write software for its "arcade" system, it will be able to control enough game titles so that Nintendo, Sega, Sony, etc., will hardly have any arcade titles to put on their systems. And once they wipe out those companies and get the home market tied up, just how long do you think Williams, Atari, Namco, etc., will be able to survive?

Never mind that we are being herded into using Windows (quite possibly the WORST possible platform to write game code on) and Intel is pushing the Pentium II (the only processor it has with a proprietary buss so it can avoid competition).

Two proprietary systems! If you are going to survive in the electronics industry, the one thing you try to avoid is proprietary systems. And here are two of them nicely bundled into one gigantic hair-brained scheme.

Perhaps a common platform would be a good idea for some games, but the only reason to use Windows and Intel is pure and simple—home machines. You want a low-cost platform for "arcade" use? How about a Cyrix or AMD Pentium clone running Linux and X-Windows? No, can't do that. Linux and X-Windows are basically free public domain software and the Cyrix and AMD processors cost at least $100 less than comparable Intel products. If we were trying to design a low cost system, we wouldn't actually TRY to use low cost products in it—would we? It would make way too much sense.

Aren't there any operators out there who have gone through this before? Where are all of you that complained for years about paying big money for games that appeared on home game machines too soon? Do you really think the answer is to make the arcade hardware the same as the home hardware?

This isn't the first time Microsoft has tried taking over the home market. It had a little thing called the MSX computer over a decade ago that was going to standardize home computers to something very close to the arcade games at the time. Microsoft based it on the Z80 processor, the 8910 sound ship, and the 9918 video chip. If this doesn't sound familiar, check out the video board of a *Baby Pac-Man.* It's almost identical hardware. Only the soft-

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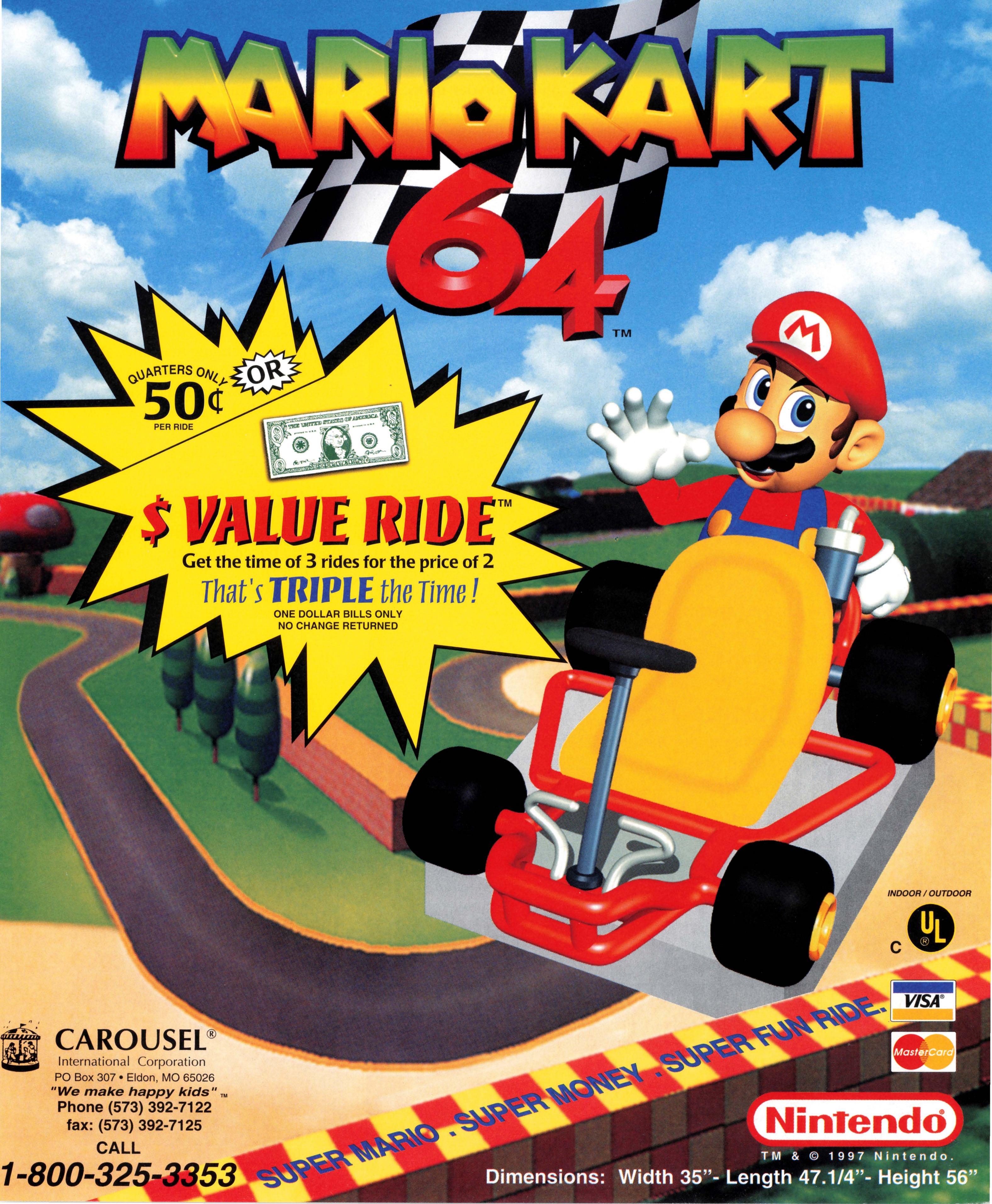
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ware was different. The MSX died an agonizing death.

Dollar coin

Every so often in your magazine I see where attempts are made to get a dollar coin. In my opinion, the people trying to get the dollar coin are going about it wrong.

Back when I had my arcade it was during the heyday of the Susan B. Anthony dollar coin. The "Carter quarter," as it was also called, had (to put in mildly) its detractors. But the coins still existed even though they seemed to drop out of circulation.

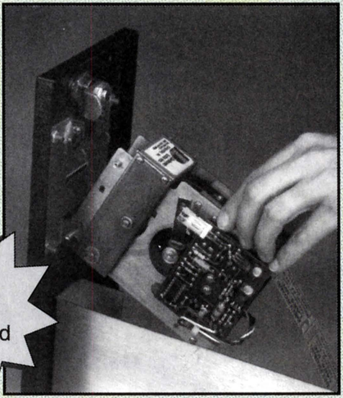
But lately several things have happened. First, the treasury needed a way to get the coins out of storage. Second, the Post Office needed some way to handle larger amounts of change from their stamp machines.

The answer? The vending machines started giving SBAs as change. The coins went back into circulation. Only problem was that people kept them instead of spending them. Now they had the vending machines and a dwindling supply of coins to put in them. The answer to that problem was to get more supplies, in other words, mint more Susies.

The SBA is here, like it or not. What the game industry needs to do is to quit trying to get another dollar coin and instead get the government to quit printing the paper dollar. Until you stop the paper dollar the dollar coin won't catch on. This has been proven time and again. Haven't we had about three different dollar coins by now?

Roger Boots
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

[Editor's note: Readers, these two topics are worthy of intense discussion. The Microsoft/Intel proposal has been discussed, disected, and deciphered many different ways. Talk to 100 people and you'll get 100 different thoughts. If any of you have a comment about it, please write, call, or e-mail. If you don't want your name used, that's OK, but we'd like to hear what you have to say.]



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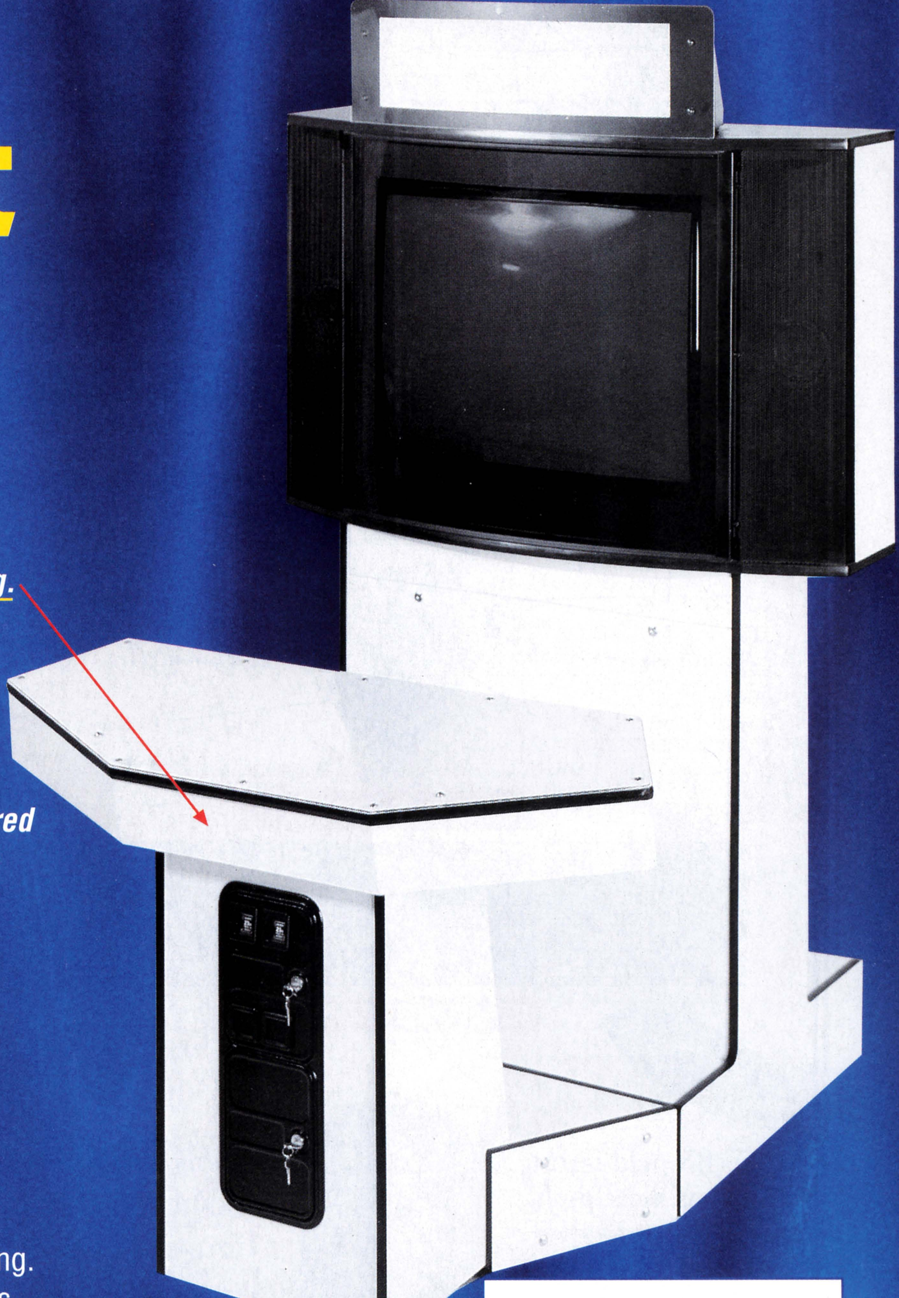

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News Now! kudos

I just reviewed your *Play Meter* News Now! at your Web site. It's terrific! Congratulations on providing this service to your readers and the coin machine industry.

Arnold A. Kaminkow
Xeko Entertainment
Newton Centre, Mass.

Victim warns fellow operators

On Aug. 3 my warehouse and the office inside were broken into. I am going to list the things I did wrong, in hopes that it will keep the same thing from happening to someone else.

1. Don't for a minute think you are in a low crime area. That was my first mistake.

2. Get a good alarm system, don't procrastinate. That was my second mistake. I kept thinking I would put a good alarm system in *someday.*

3. Lock all your vending and vehicle keys in your safe; don't assume a locked key cabinet is adequate like I did.

4. If you have cutting torches stored in your warehouse, take the tips off and lock them in the safe. The thieves used my cutting torches to cut into my safe.

5. Take the keys out of your vans and lock them, even when they are locked in the warehouse, then lock the keys in your safe.

6. Check with your insurance agent to find out your exact coverage; don't assume something is covered.

I would strongly advise operators, regardless of size, to look into their situations and take the needed steps to avoid the anguish I have gone through. You have no idea how violated you feel after you have been a victim.

Most small police departments are still in the '50s while the crooks are in the '90s, so you have to protect yourself to the best of your ability. ▲

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You must pace your horse based on the horses' abilities. Otherwise, the horse will lose stamina before it reaches the finish line.

- Select from 1 of 3 tracks:
  - 6 1/2 Furlongs
  - 1 Mile
  - 1 1/2 Mile
- Link two cabinets for the ultimate 4 player racing experience!
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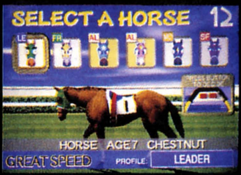
- Races are broadcast "live" to add to the realism of the sport!

Choose 1 of 6 Horses

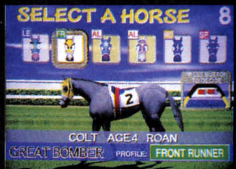
LEADER

This horse maintains its pace in the first position. Be careful not to run to fast or you will lose the stamina needed to finish the race in the first place.


SELECT A HORSE 12
HORSE AGE7 CHESTNUT
GREAT SPEED
PROFILE
LEADER

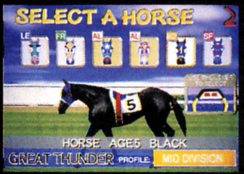
FRONT RUNNER

This horses' best pace is between the 2nd and 4th position.


SELECT A HORSE 8
COLT AGE4 ROAN
GREAT BOMBER
PROFILE
FRONT RUNNER

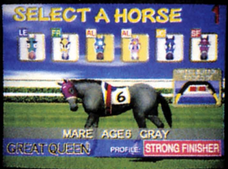
MID RUNNER

The 5th to 7th is the best position for this horse in the first half of the race.


SELECT A HORSE 2
HORSE AGE5 BLACK
GREAT THUNDER
PROFILE
MID DIVISION

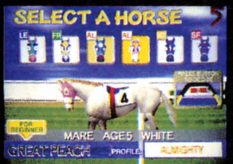
STRONG FINISHER

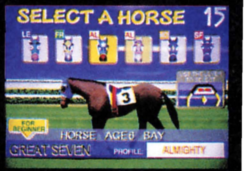
This horse hangs back until the "sprint point" and then busts loose with all its' might.

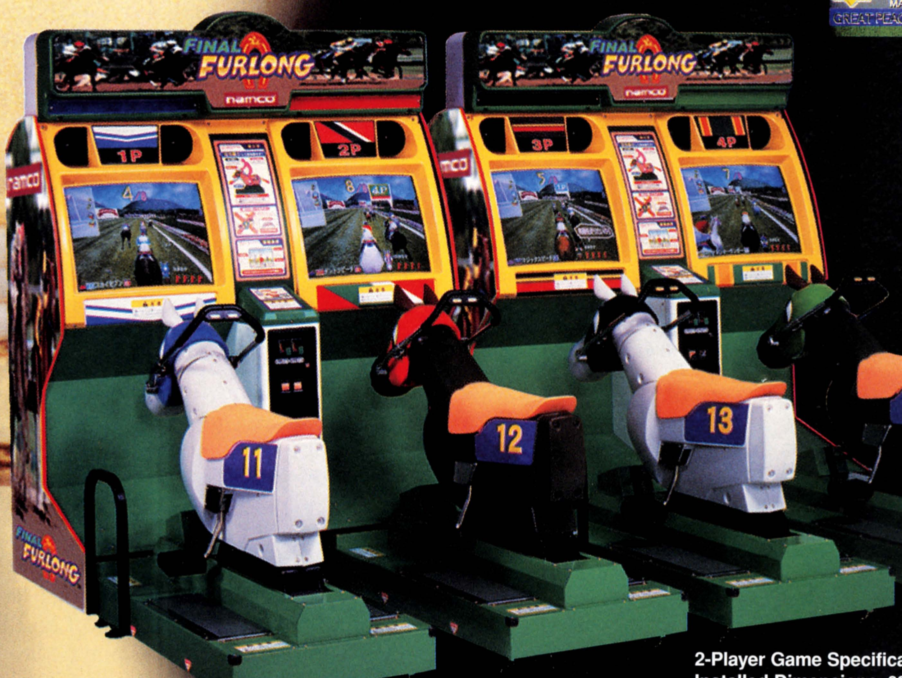

SELECT A HORSE 1
MARE AGE6 GRAY
GREAT QUEEN
PROFILE
STRONG FINISHER

2 ALMIGHTY RUNNER'S

For novice jockeys.
This horse can keep pace in any of the previous positions.


SELECT A HORSE 5
FOR BEGINNER
MARE AGE5 WHITE
GREAT PEACH
PROFILE
ALMIGHTY


SELECT A HORSE 15
FOR BEGINNER
HORSE AGE8 BAY
GREAT SEVEN
PROFILE
ALMIGHTY


FINAL FURLONG
namco
1P
2P
3P
4P
11
12
13
14

2-Player Game Specifications:
Installed Dimensions: 89" H x 68.5" W x 85" D
Power Consumption: 450 watts
Specifications subject to change without notice.

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FROM LEFT FIELD

Are we on the verge of PLATFORM CONVERGENCE?

Steve White

Special Projects Editor

Several years ago there was a good deal in the newspapers about a coming event that believers were calling the Harmonic Convergence. I don't remember many of the details surrounding this much-awaited happening, but I always liked the way it sounded.

I recently came across the word convergence in a different context, a book recommended to me by local operator and distributor Jack Boasberg of New Orleans Novelty. Jack is what you would call a student of the industry, with an equal amount of intellectual and economic passion for the amusement game business, and when I ran into him bustling out of the local Barnes & Noble with three copies of J.C. Herz's recent release "Joystick Nation: How Videogames Ate Our Quarters, Won Our Hearts, And Rewired Our Minds," I was intrigued to say the least.

The book is a fascinating look at our industry from the outside in, written with a game player's unabashed enthusiasm for good games and a nostalgia for the industry in its heyday incarnation. In examining the trend toward family entertainment centers and redemption following the video bust of the early 1980s, Herz writes: "Awash in pink bunnies and nylon frog puppets, the arcade quickly lost its cachet for dissipated adolescents. The *Skee-Ball* machine was no place for any self-respecting teenager to strike a pose—it's kind of hard to be dangerous and cool when your five-year-old sister is lobbing Nerf balls 20 steps away."

Herz says the arcade in the heyday of video "demanded alertness. They were dark. There was a whiff of challenge and danger and sweat in the air." The online game dens found on the Internet are the "true heir" to the arcade of the late 1970s and early 1980s, she claims.

Fascinating as this argument may be, it was in Herz's analysis of an earlier video game bust that I found a corollary which may prove illuminating to the present. In the waning years of the 1970s and early part of the following decade, home video game manufacturers such as Atari, Bally, Coleco, and Mattel attempted to compete with the budding home PC industry by introducing game systems that operated in some ways like a home computer.

"A dozen years before `convergence' became the buzzword of would-be multimedia computer cable, Internet set-top box manufacturers, video games and computers were foaming together in the same yeasty vat of electronics, entertainment, and shotgun marketing," Herz writes.

But it didn't work then, or in the following years, Herz argues, because Americans have a difficult time changing their cultural assumptions. The collective mindset of this country tells us that a computer is for business and serious matters, while a video game is pure fun, and never the two shall meet despite the fact that video games are simply computers in disguise. The analogy Herz draws is the dining room, which is little used in many households despite the fact that plans for all new houses contain space dedicated for one.

"Technology may blur to the point where the guts of a game machine are nearly indistinguishable from the guts of a home computer," she concludes. "We may well buy the same chips twice. But one set will look like a computer and live on a desk, and another will look like a TV accessory and live in, well, the living room. When the dining room dies, that's where the multimedia sneed will go."

In the video game debate that has been ongoing for the last year, representatives of large PC companies such as Microsoft and Intel have argued that time is here—at least in the commercial pay-for-play video game marketplace. They say consumers may employ serious-minded rationalizations when buying a computer but ultimately use it more for fun. That contradiction can be tapped into by our industry and theirs for additional profits, the PC companies claim.

Has that time really arrived? Has technology evolved past these preconcieved notions? Quite possibly, but I still see a lot of dining rooms around. Maybe, like the arcade of the video heyday, the current situation demands alertness because there is definitely a "whiff of challenge and danger and sweat in the air." ▲

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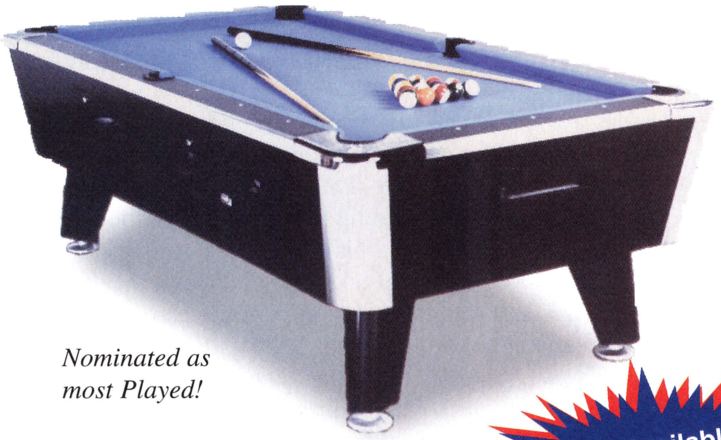

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Sega, Worldwide suit resurrects parallel board issue for operators

Sega Enterprises was granted a preliminary injunction against Worldwide Video Entertainment and the Pak Mann Arcade in San Diego, Calif., in its federal suit over allegations of copyright infringement. The marquees have already been turned over to Sega's attorneys, according to defense attorneys.

While the suit covers only a marquee used in conjunction with a *House of the Dead* game that Worldwide bought as a parallel kit overseas, it has resurrected the controversial issue and prompted several operators to call for renewed efforts at gaining legislative relief against the legal ramifications of buying parallel games.

Previous legislation protecting the purchase of parallel imports sunset two years ago, and operators and manufacturers agreed not to renew legislative and judicial fights after American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) member factories signed affirmations that they would not market products overseas in kit form unless they were available in kit form in the United States as well. After filing the suit, Sega has said its intention was to follow that agreement when possible.

Members of the board of directors of the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) say they intend to look into compliance by factories that signed off on the agreement. Former AMOA president Craig Johnson has been unofficially nominated to head up the effort.

AMOA secretary Frank Seninsky said the information needed to determine whether the agreement was being lived up to should not be hard to obtain. "My main concern is whether Sega is living up to its promise," he said. "It should be easy to prove. If they are not, we've got a real problem."

"It's a shame what this issue has done to our industry," added AMOA government relations committee chairman and treasurer Jim Stansfield. The current situation "seems to be in violation of what was agreed upon, but we don't know all the facts yet. I certainly hope we are not going to rehash this. Nobody is going to win. We need to settle this within the industry."

While AMOA has not taken any official stance on the issue, Stansfield said he was confident the association would "when enough information has been gathered."

However, AAMA executive director Bob Fay said—despite some reports to the contrary—the manufacturers' association would not be looking into the issue or taking any official position. To do so, on its part, would be a possible antitrust violation, Fay said, adding that AAMA only agreed not to take its case to Congress in 1995 when the legislation sunset.

"AAMA has no role in this, has not done anything, will do nothing," he said. "This is strictly between individual members. Individual companies set their own policy on how to market and sell products. A trade association cannot get involved."

Code of conduct on video content sent to Capitol Hill

A newly devised code of conduct and parental advisory kit, including an information kit, has been agreed upon by ranking members of AAMA and AMOA, but neither association was ready to make the details public pending informal approval by key members of Congress.

The proposal has been submitted to Sens. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) and Herbert Kohl (D-Wis.). Staff members from the senators' offices traveled to ASI `97 in Las Vegas this year to express concern over continued inattention to violent game content. That visit prompted the drafting of a new code of conduct to supplement the current ratings system, which was devised over two years ago but has been seen on only a few games.

"We think we have got it all together but we've got to get the guys in Washington to approve it," said AMOA government relations committee chairman Jim Stansfield. "Until that happens, we don't want to release any of the details."

Bob Fay, executive director of the AAMA, said he expected some initial feedback from Congressional staff members as early as the end of September. "The ball is now in their court," he said. Look to the next issue of *Play Meter* for more on this subject.

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Happ, Dynamo working on arcade PC initiative

The attempt to bring arcade-style coin-op games based on PC technology to market has been joined by two stalwarts of the industry, Dynamo and Happ Controls, both of which recently announced their desire to work with software developers to bring the concept to fruition.

The announcements came at the first meeting of the Intel-sponsored Open Arcade Architecture Forum in late August. (For more on the meeting, turn to "Through the Looking Glass," p. 104 in this issue.)

Happ's Ralph Orlowski said software developers will need someone to guide them through the maze they will face. "It will be interesting because the platform has, and has not, been determined and the software guys are asking where's the money," he said. "They think whatever game they design will be a winner."

Another challenge that the initiative will face, according to Orlowski, is developing a basic understanding of the coin-op amusement industry's economic dynamics, which might not support the kind of high-end technology being discussed by Intel and developers looking to the location-based entertainment market.

"It boils down to who is going to spend the money to do the testing that is necessary," he added. "If you are building a Cadillac, you don't need it. Not every game is going to be a hit."

Nevertheless, Orlowski said that Happ believes the PC platform will take hold, and it plans to be on the cutting edge both from the standpoint of software development and the production of necessary peripherals and joysticks, which it has been working on since early in the public PC debate. "Something will work and we want to be on the forefront," he concluded.

Dynamo president Bill Rickett said his company is also approaching the issue from several different perspectives including: developing a systems-based cabinet that will be complete with internal PC unit, working with several software developers on the production and manufacture of games, and designing and producing a cabinet for AMOA's National Amusement Network (which was under test in the Pacific Northwest at press time).

Rickett said the Catch 22 is operators will not buy cabinets without the availability of games and many software developers are reluctant to invest money in the development of game without an installed base of system cabinets.

"Who's going to go first?" asked Rickett. "That's the big problem that everybody's facing."

Getting in the spirit

The 22nd International Nightclub & Bar Expo, held in late August, marked the debut of the first National Beer, Wine & Spirits Beverage Retailer Expo. Both AMOA and AAMA participated in the show, coordinating several seminars dealing with new products and operator issues.

Dollar coin hearing canceled in Congress

A hearing set for last month in Congress to discuss the authorization of a new dollar coin was canceled, although members of Congress appeared to be willing to move forward with legislation circulating a commemorative quarter recognizing each of the 50 states, according to a recent Coin Coalition update.

A Federal Reserve economist, Mark Wynne, has also published an article in *Southwest Economy*, the Dallas Federal Reserve's publication, supporting the dollar coin. Wynne claims that an exclusive dollar coin could save as much as $500 million annually.

The failure of the dollar coin when the Susan B. Anthony was introduced can be blamed on the continued use of the dollar bill, as well as the dilemma between the cost of retooling vending machines and other "payments infrastructure" without an expectation of public acceptance and the public's unwillingness to use the coins without such infrastructure changes.

In a final note, the Coin Coalition update reported on the minting of a new dollar coin sample featuring a "Flowing Hair Liberty" design by Arkansas die maker Ron Landis at the request of the American Numismatic Association. The coin is the same size as the Susan B. Anthony.

EMT offers purchasing options for Muppet Babies

Operators looking to purchase EMT's line of Muppet Babies kiddie rides now have two additional options to consider: a rebate on certain rides and a financing program lasting through part of this month.

With the cash purchase of EMT Muppet Babies car, music swing, or carousel ride, the company will deduct $300 off the invoice cost. Through Oct. 15, operators purchasing $9,000 worth of equipment (approximately three rides), can finance the rides through Firestone Financial Corp. for 24 months with no interest and a minimal down payment, plus taxes and document fees. For more information, contact EMT distributor Tom Dudley, (601)845-7501 or (800)647-6460; fax (601)845-8338.

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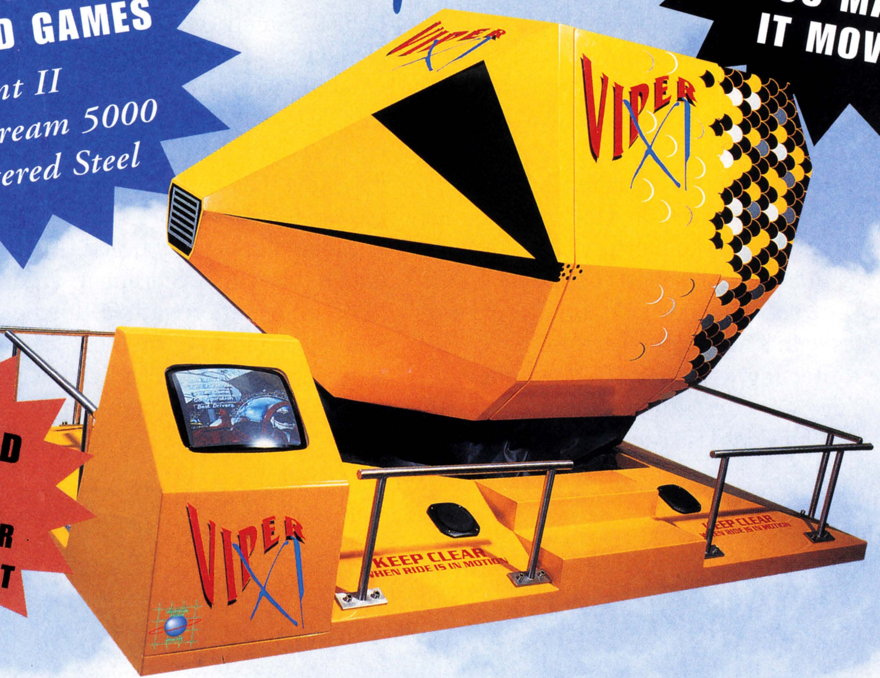
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This compact unit measures 10'6"x 5'6" x 5'6" high and only requires 58 square feet of space. The Viper X1 is a single seat, fully enclosed, capsule.

Players view game action on a large 28" video monitor and control both graphics and motion with an aviation style joy stick.

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IAFEC selects Sterling & Sterling for its sponsored insurance program

The International Association of Family Entertainment Centers (IAFEC) has designated Sterling & Sterling insurance brokers of Great Neck, N.Y., as the official broker for a new series of insurance products for family entertainment centers.

"We have been working on this for several years," said outgoing IAFEC president Ed Pearson. "Almost from the day IAFEC was founded, members have told us that finding affordable insurance with a rated carrier has always been a problem in the amusement industry.

"After a great deal of work and consideration, we have chosen Sterling & Sterling as the broker to develop the program for us. They are known for great customer service and a thorough knowledge of the industry, " Pearson continued. "With the group purchasing power we can provide, we'll also enjoy highly competitive rates with a highly rated carrier."

Initially, Sterling & Sterling will offer $5-$50 million in umbrella coverage. They are currently gathering loss data from IAFEC members. "This data is crucial so that our broker can negotiate the best possible rates from the insurance carrier," said IAFEC executive director Carole Sjolander, adding that once this data collection is completed, general liability coverage should be available this month.

Sterling & Sterling will also work with IAFEC to develop safety programs and educational materials to assist members in managing their risk effectively. "We have a long-time commitment to this industry and are pledged to making this an outstanding program that will serve IAFEC members will," said Sterling & Sterling president David Sterling.

"As quickly as possible, we plan to add Worker's Compensation (with individual dividend plans and the potential for association dividend plans) as well as automobile," continued Pearson. "Once we have laid the groundwork with the liability coverages needed, we may expand into health, life, and property-related coverages."

R. Wayne Pierce, attorney at Niles, Barton & Wilmer and IAFEC's safety and insurance committee chairman was singled out for thanks by Pearson. "Wayne has provided immeasurable assistance in getting this program started," Pearson said. "He will continue to play an essential role as national counsel for the program. As national counsel, he will be representing the association and the policyholders when claims require it."

Sjolander strongly urged IAFEC members to provide risk data to Sterling & Sterling in order to achieve the best rates. "The information gathered is held in strict confidence by Sterling & Sterling," she said. "The association itself sees only aggregate data, never individual facility data."

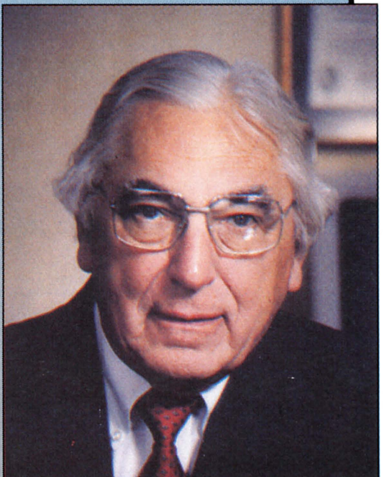
For information on the insurance program, call IAFEC, (603)464-6498; or Sterling & Sterling, (516)487-0300.

Industry veteran Flynn passes away

The 76-year-old founder of J & J Distributors Inc. in Indianapolis, Ind., Joe Flynn, passed away recently at his home in Indianapolis. He had been active in the coin machine industry for more than 40 years, beginning in 1938 when he joined the staff at Shaffer Distributing in Columbus, Ohio.

Flynn worked at Shaffer for 21 years with time off for military service in the U.S. Army during World War II before founding J & J along with partner John Stocksdale in 1959. He was a founder of the Indiana Vending Council in 1962 to promote the interests of coin machine vendors.

Joe Flynn



He also won an Indiana Appellate Court decision in 1964 that allowed the enjoyment of pinball machines for amusement in the state of Indiana. Highlights of that case involved having judges play pinball machines in the courtroom to demonstrate that pinball machines were not gambling devices.

Flynn retired in 1982 and split his time with wife Jane between their homes in Indianapolis and Sarasota, Fla. He served as a director of the Indianapolis Indians baseball team (the Cincinnati Reds AAA team) for 25 years and held volunteer posts with the Rotary Club, Catholic Social Services, and Cathedral High School.

Jane Flynn died in 1995. Flynn is survived by brother Bernie (retired from a long career with Shaffer), daughters Patty Hughes and Joellen Flynn, son Kelly who is current president of J & J, and five grandchildren. J & J represents major manufacturers in the industry with offices in Indianapolis and St. Louis, Mo.

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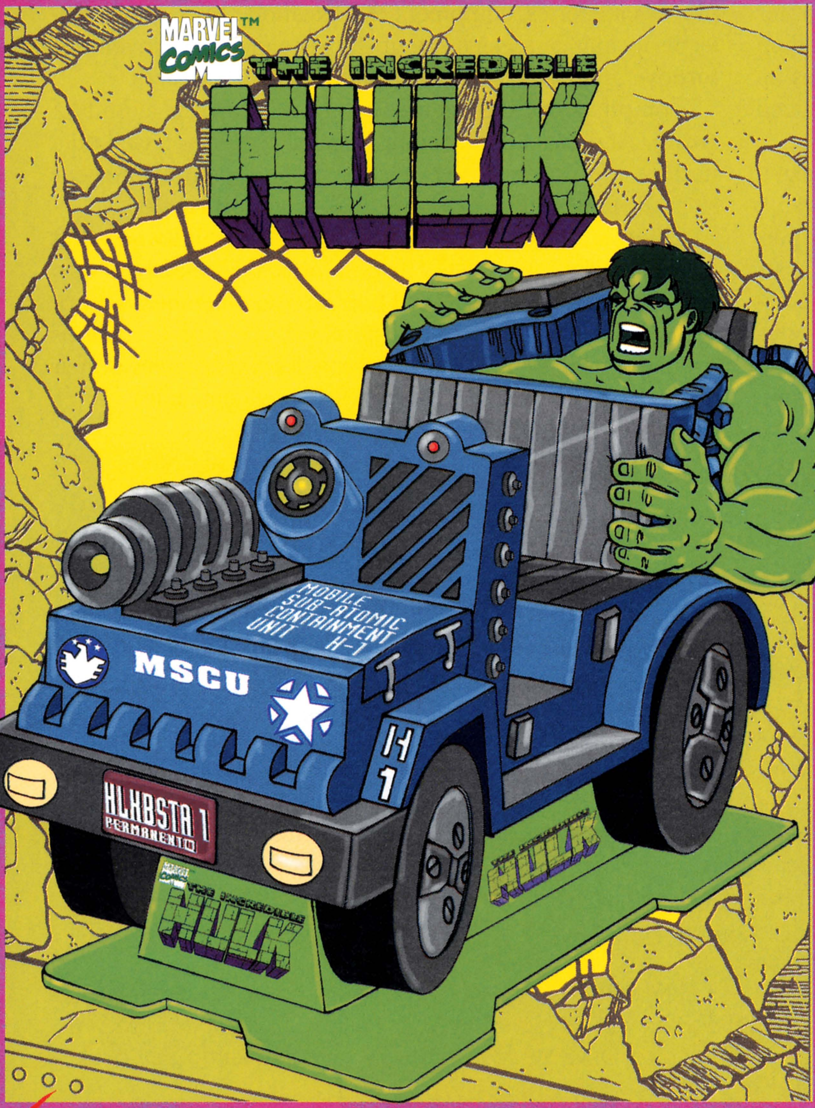
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Vending companies report improved results for 1996

Overall operating results in the vending industry improved in 1996, the National Automatic Merchandising Association reported recently. The announcement was based on its annual survey of vending operators.

The 1997 NAMA Operating Ratio Report showed that for vending service companies with annual sales over $1 million reporting for both 1996 and the prior year, overall sales increased one percent and operating profit margins improved to 4.5 percent from 4.0 percent in 1995.

The overall 1996 operating profit margin for all participants with sales in excess of $1 million was 4.3 percent. However, the top 25 percent performers realized an 8.6 percent margin. Operating profits represent sales less all costs except parent company overhead allocations, interest expense, and distribution to shareholders. It also excludes some other income.

Participating companies with less than $1 million in annual sales, reporting in both years showed an operating profit of 1.9 percent of sales vs. a 3.2 percent loss for the previous year. However, the aggregate result for all participants of this size in 1996 was an operating loss of 2.5 percent of sales.

Operating profits for office coffee services were reported at 14.1 percent of sales for 1996 vs. 11.37 percent for 1995.

"It is interesting to note that companies who participate regularly in the NAMA Operating Ratio Report typically outperform the others, suggesting that they may also be using the in-depth details of the report to help identify opportunities to improve their performance," said NAMA president James Rost.

Vending operating results are presented by company size and, new this year, by region of the country. OCS/CSV and manual food service performance results are also detailed in the report. With this report, companies can compare their own financial results with others their size, in the region, or with the top 25 percent performers.

NAMA's report also includes sales per machine and gross profits—by product category, productivity statistics for all employee categories, equipment depreciation policies, and other performance measurement statistics including inventory turnover, return on assets, cash flow rates, and others.

Compiled by Management Foresight (MFI), a unit of Arthur Andersen, the Operating Ration Report is based on a nationwide survey which has been conducted every year since 1947. Vending operators of all sizes participated.

Copies of the report were sent out free to companies that participated in the survey. The cost for NAMA members who did not participate is $200 and $350 for non-members. Participants were able to obtain a customized sales and operations comparison for their individual companies which confirms their firm's performance against that of their peer companies.

VNEA hosts ninth annual charter holder workshop

The ninth annual Valley National Eight-Ball charter holder workshop was held late this summer at the Bay Valley Hotel & Resort in Bay City, Mich., with over 100 owners and league coordinators from 50 different companies in 18 states and Canada in attendance.

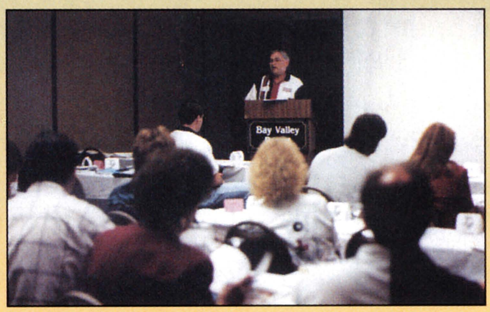
The weekend meeting got off to a fun start with a golf scramble at the Bay Valley Country Club followed by an awards banquet luncheon sponsored by Valley Recreation Products. Attendees were also taken by bus to the Valley facility in Bay City to get a first-hand look at the company's manufacturing facility and products.

Charter holders also had an opportunity to attend nine informative seminars with a number of speakers including Tom Elum of Elum Music (membership chairman), Gary Nelson of Stansfield Vending (president), Gary Benson of High Country Promotions (tournament director), and Vince Leavy of Western Automatic Amusement.

These and other panel members led seminars on the following topics: Seven Easy Steps (for leagues), Juniors/Year-End Get-Togethers, Rules/Disputes, Fundraisers/Sponsors, Divisionalizing/Scheduling, Administrative/VIFA, New Accounts/New Players, Tournaments, and Competition.

The rest of the weekend was filled with exciting social events including a cocktail party with pool tables, foosball, and dart boards set up in Bay Valley's upper lounge area and an appearance by world speed champion Dave Pearson. Saturday evening featured a cookout and Vegas night.

World speed pool champion Dave Pearson, dressed as the King of England, made a grand appearance during Friday evening's production.



VNEA president Gary Nelson conducts one of his information packed seminars.

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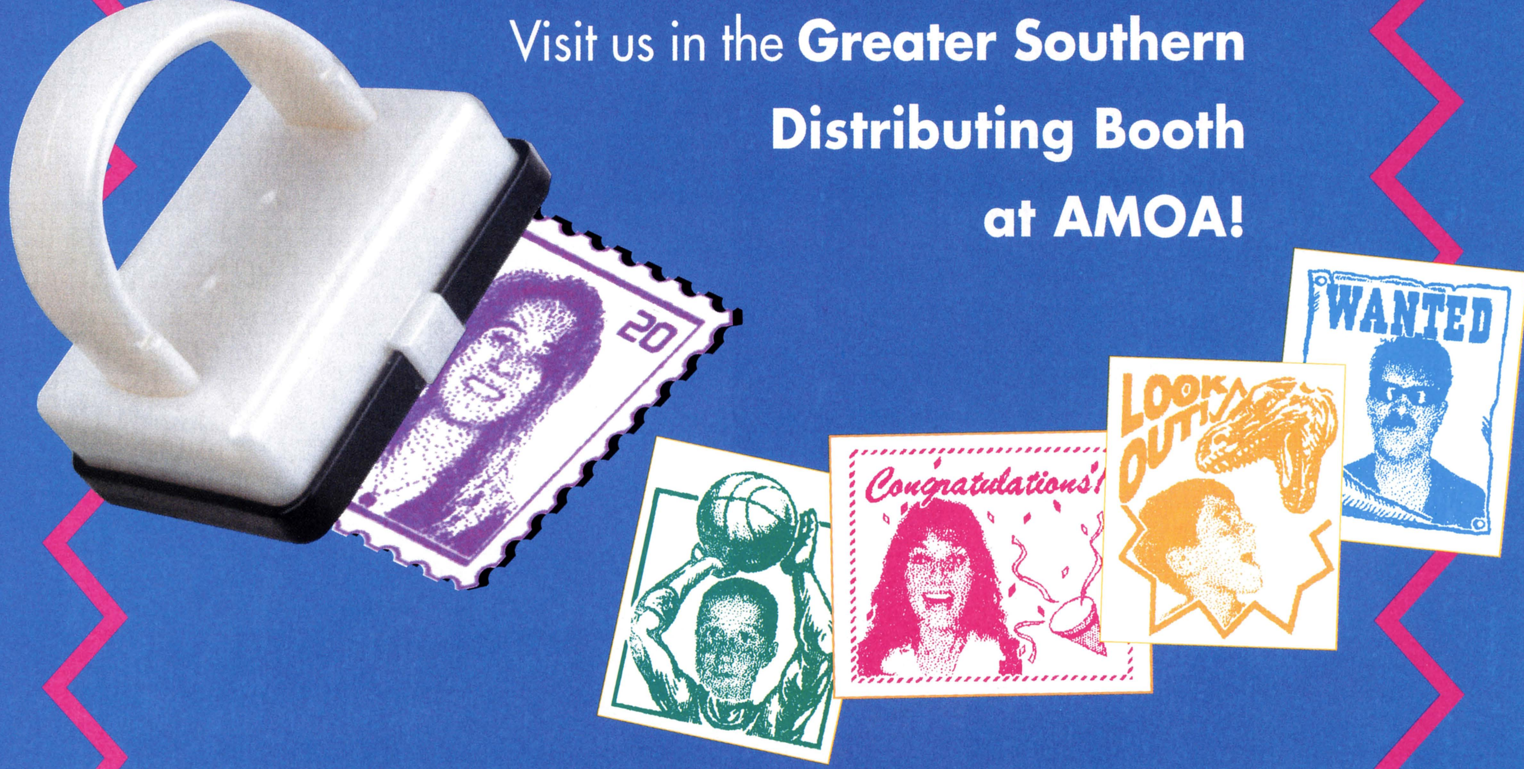

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Acclaim introduces *Judge Dredd* video

Acclaim Coin-Op was scheduled to unveil its newest arcade video game, *Judge Dredd*, early this month at the FER show in Madrid Spain, according to the company's Leon Deith.

Shipping date was scheduled for Oct. 15, and Acclaim is introducing the two-player game as a convertible kit complete with guns, holsters, top flash, control panel overlay, and side decals.

The game propels players through four worlds and 15 levels that involve fighting through tunnels, plazas, escalators, lift shafts, and mezzanine floors. Features include SGI graphics, full motion video sequences incorporating motion capture technology, and bonus powerups and secret rooms.

Play-By-Play signs deal with Warner Bros.

Play-By-Play Toys & Novelties has signed an exclusive worldwide toy license agreement with Warner Bros. Consumer Products to design, manufacture, and distribute its Baby Looney Tunes product line, which is expected to generate more than $50 million over the term of the license.

Under the terms of the agreement, Play-By-Play and Warner Bros. will create an innovative, developmental line of infant, toddler, and preschool Baby Looney Tunes products ranging from play toys to toddler pull toys. Play-By-Play will manufacture the toys and distribute them to the retail market. The initial product line will begin shipping in the first quarter of next year.

""We are pleased again to partner with Play-By-Play," said George Jones, president of worldwide licensing for Warner Bros. Consumer Products. "Their track record of manufacturing and distributing superior product lines consistent with our high standards was a major factor in awarding this license."

Play-By-Play chairman Arturo Torres said the company was "delighted" to be entering the preschool market with the Baby Looney Tunes license. "In line with our growth strategy, Baby Looney Tunes will also enable us to further penetrate the retail market by broadening our line of licensed products while creating unique product niches," he added.

IAAPA looks to Orlando for fun-filled convention

The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions is all set to "Experience the Magic of Fun" at its mega-event convention and trade show Nov. 19-22 at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Fla.

More than 1,000 exhibitors are expected to showcase 4,200 booths with the newest thrill-filled rides, products, and services in the world aimed at close to 23,000 expected attendees. The show will also include critical workshops and presentations for members of all levels of the amusement industry.

For the sixth year in a row the convention hall will also feature a show within a show, a special area dedicated to exploring the latest in amusement and entertainment technology featuring hundreds of companies that specialize in bringing to market the most dynamic attractions. These include companies involved in developing virtual reality, motion simulation, and giant screen video and film technology.

More traditional amusement operators will also be able to see the latest in rides, the best in coin-op video and redemption equipment and related products, and an outdoor Magical Midway.

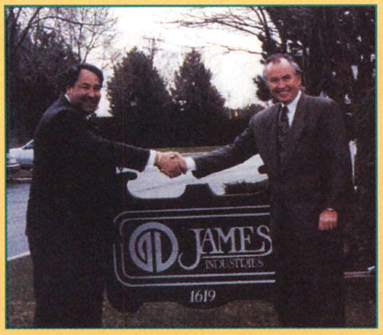
A full slate of 30 workshops will cover topics that range from family entertainment center attractions and issues to food and customer service. Notable speakers include Michael Getlan of Amusement Consultants Ltd., Jill Bensley of J.B. Research, Terry Weerts of Celebration Station, Ben Jones of RECreation, Tim Sorge of Swings 'N Things, Elena Ruane of Enchanted Castle, Tim Ruedy of Knott's Camp Snoopy, and IAAPA president Gena Romano of Nellie Bly Park.

A special series of courses entitled The Amusement Facility Management School will offer the following classes: The Oz Principle: Creating a Culture of Individual and Organizational Accountability, Passion for Leadership, Planning to Manage Service Out of the Box, and Diversity as a Business Advantage.

Special events include the What's New Theater multimedia presentation on opening day and the Festival of Fun hosted by Universal Studios Florida. In addition, the 12th Annual Brass Ring Awards will honor outstanding marketing and advertising programs. No less than 62 awards will be presented for exhibits and products in 15 different categories, judged by the Exhibitor Awards Committee. The deadline for all Best Exhibit awards and the Image Award for the Best Exhibit of the show is Oct. 24.

For more information, contact IAAPA, 1448 Duke St., Alexandria, VA 22314; (703)836-4800; fax (703)836-4801; or check out the IAAPA Web site (http://www.iaapa.org).

Let's shake on it



James Industries president Jim Roberts (r) recently hosted Mike Omansky, president of PartStar/ResourcElectronics, at James' Inverness, Ill., headquarters. As a result, James will represent PartStar, an electronic component distributor with annual sales in excess of $100 million.

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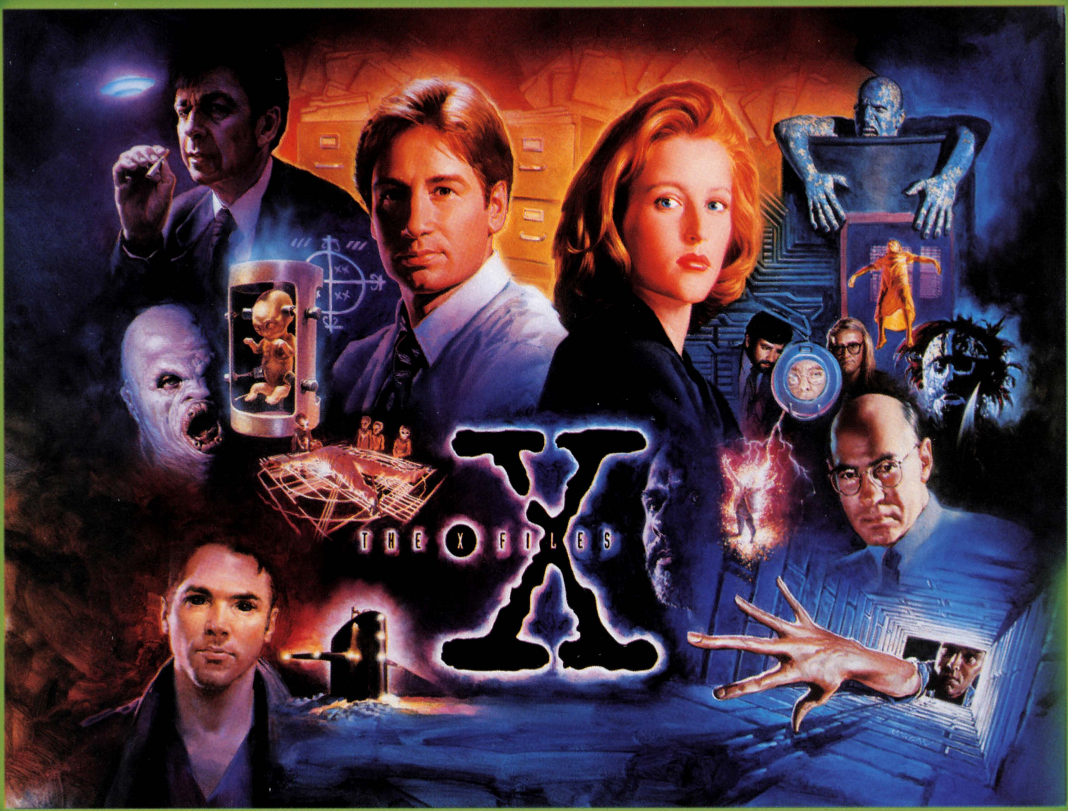

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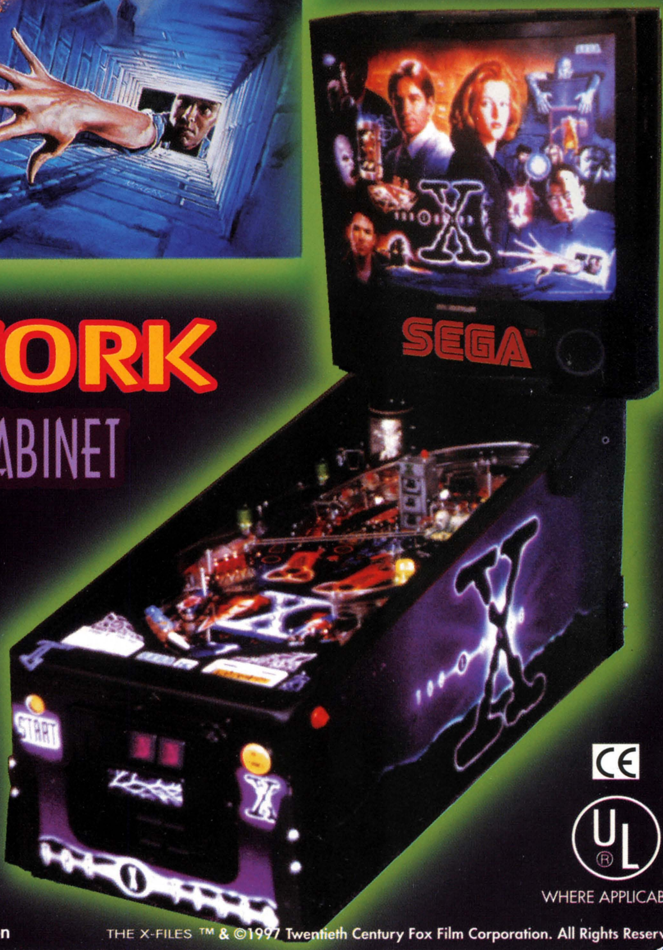

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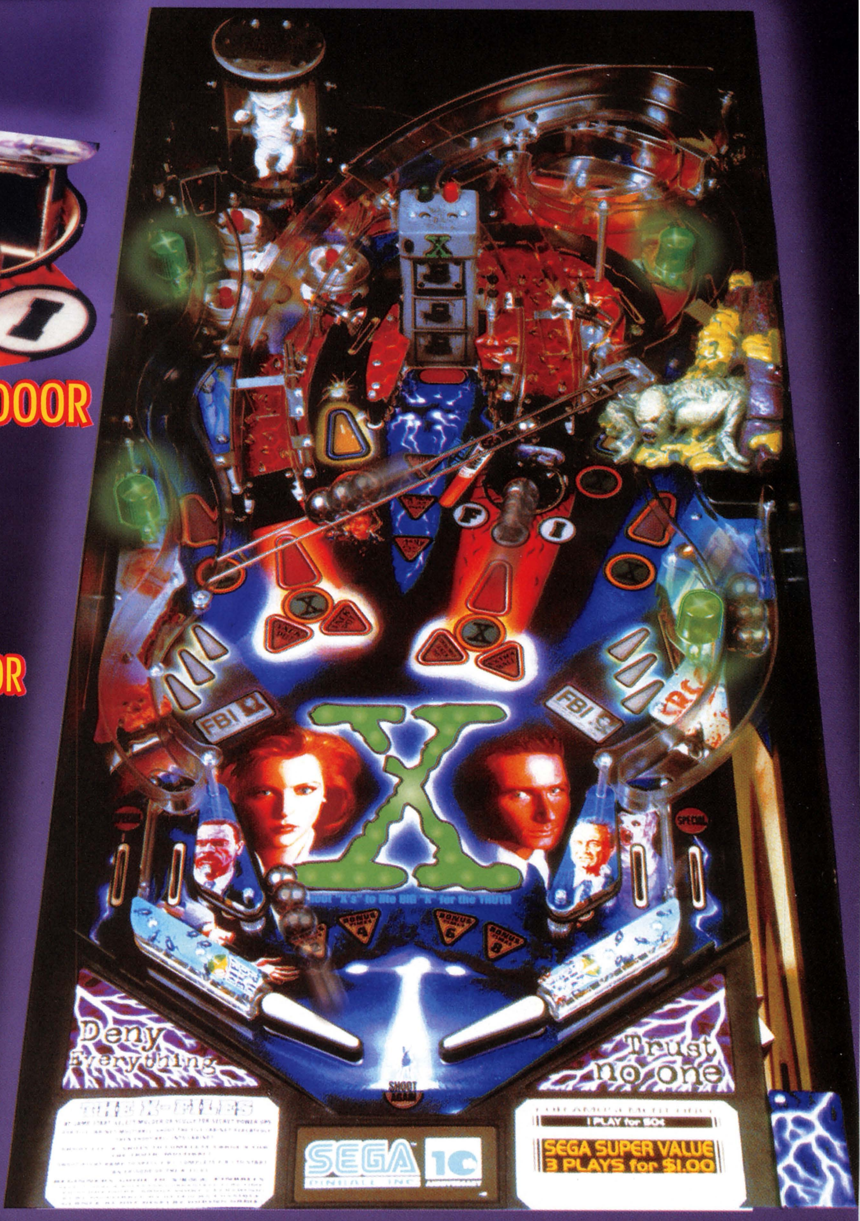

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New York City repeals tax on amusement machines

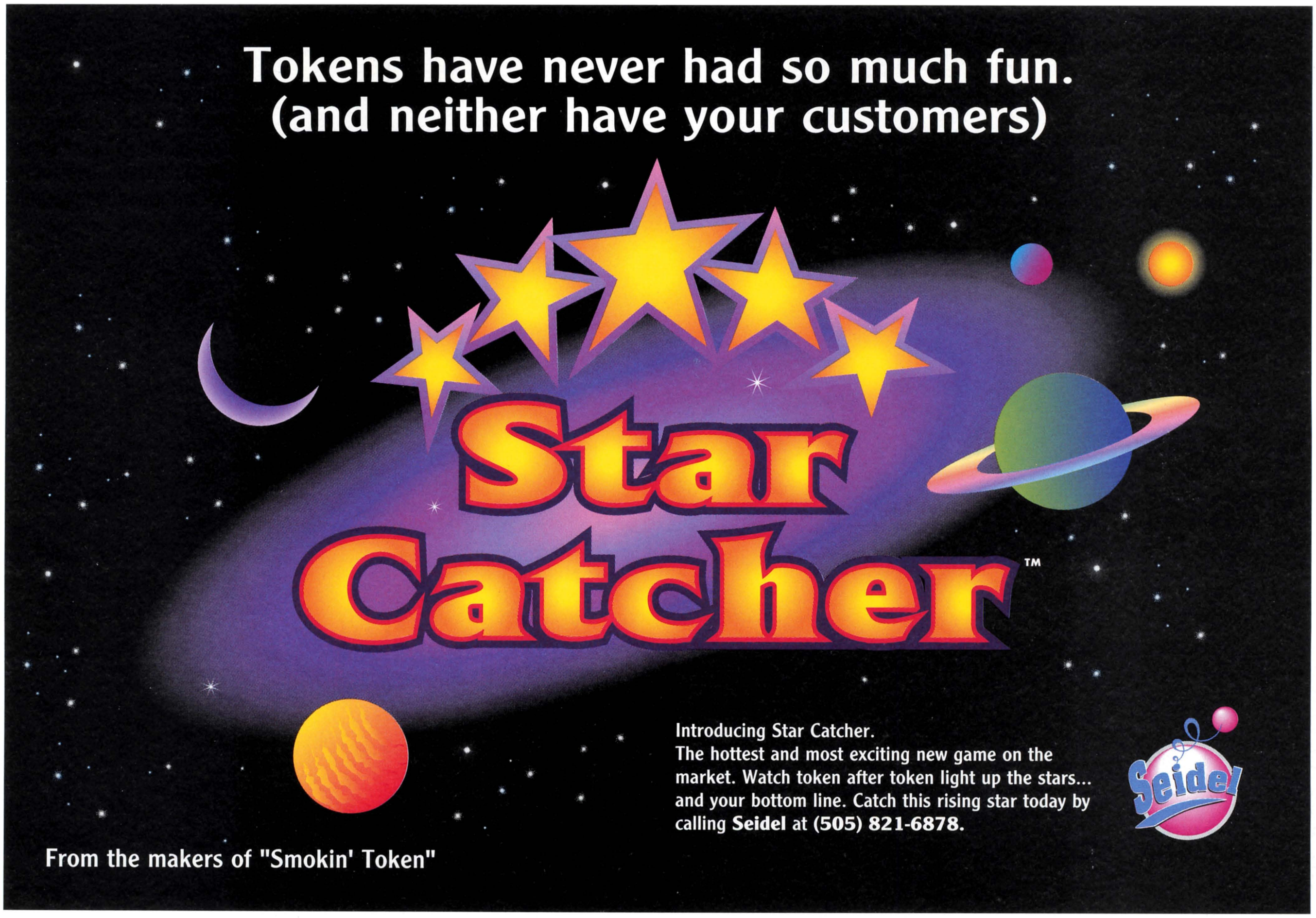
New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani signs into law a measure repealing the tax on coin-op amusement devices. Seated, (l-r): Staten Island borough president Guy Molonari, Giuliani, Councilman James O'Donovan, and Councilman Howard Lasher. Standing, (l-r): Peter Horowitz, Salvatore Bianco, Joseph Bianco, Joseph Bossolina, Richard Simon, and Cary David Kessler, all of AMOA-N.Y., and Adam Barsky and Peter Lempin, both of the city's finance department.

This summer's repeal of the tax on coin-op amusement devices by New York City marks the second time in two years that members of the Amusement and Music Owners Association of New York has been able to achieve significant financial relief. In 1995, the city repealed the license requirement and fee for most amusement games.

The $175 per machine tax, coupled with the already repealed $50 bi-annual license per machine, had practically crippled the industry within New York City. "Without exaggeration, Mayor Giuliani has rescued our industry," said AMOA-N.Y. Robert Herman of Ace Amusements in Brooklyn. "We are now hopeful we can recover from the financial crisis the tax imposed on us."

Members of the association were also relieved of all the paperwork that attended the tax. "Since time is money in our business, the repeal of any paper filings for amusement machines is almost as financially important as the tax and license fee elimination," said Joseph Bossolina, an executive board member of the association and president of McGee Amusements of Ridgefield, N.J.

Lobbying efforts were led by AMOA-N.Y.'s general counsel Cary David Kessler, who thanked members for attending numerous meetings with the mayor and other elected and appointed officials. "However," Kessler concluded, "the fact that the mayor and his staff listened speaks for itself—no more license fees or taxes. Sometimes `hell freezes over,' taxes do get repealed, and for that the mayor deserves the thanks of all AMOA-N.Y. members."



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Poised to take SNK into the future—back row, (l-r): John Barone, executive vice president; Susan Barone, general manager; Mr. Mitsuhiro Tanaka, executive vice preisdent of administration; and Darryl Williams, technical manager— front row, (l-r): Mr. Yoshikazu Jinno, president; Eli Davalos, Latin/South America sales; Tim Jackson, director of North America sales; and Jeff Yantz, Eastern regional sales manager. For more on SNK's new products and plans, turn to page 148.

Amusement seminars part of World Gaming Congress

While products and services for the gaming industry dominate the exhibits and seminars at the upcoming World Gaming Congress in Las Vegas Oct. 14-15, the value of traditional amusements in the casino atmosphere is recognized in several educational sessions.

Among those are 1) "Amusements in the Modern Casino Environment," with speakers Michael Getlan, director of operations for Amusement Consultants, and Clifford Hay, director of rides and attractions for the Luxor Hotel/Casino and Circus Circus Grand Slam Canyon; and 2) "Case Study: The Making of New York-New York," a two-part session featuring moderator Christina Briggs of Federal Sign and Michael Getlan whose Coney Island Emporium is located in the New York-New York hotel complex.

An extensive list of other sessions covers everything from Indian gaming to human resources and financing. For up-to-date information on speakers and seminars, call (212)594-4120, ext. 311; for registration, call (301)694-5243.

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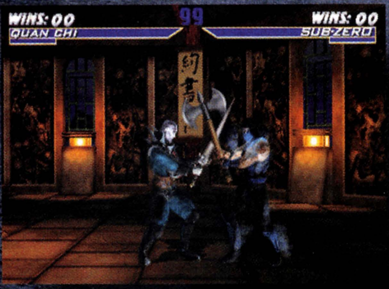
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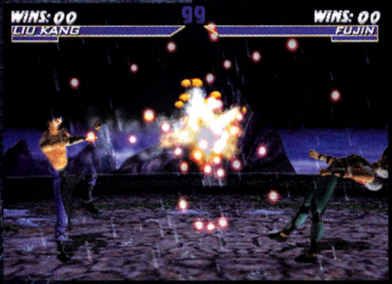
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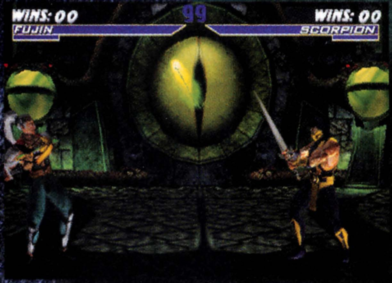
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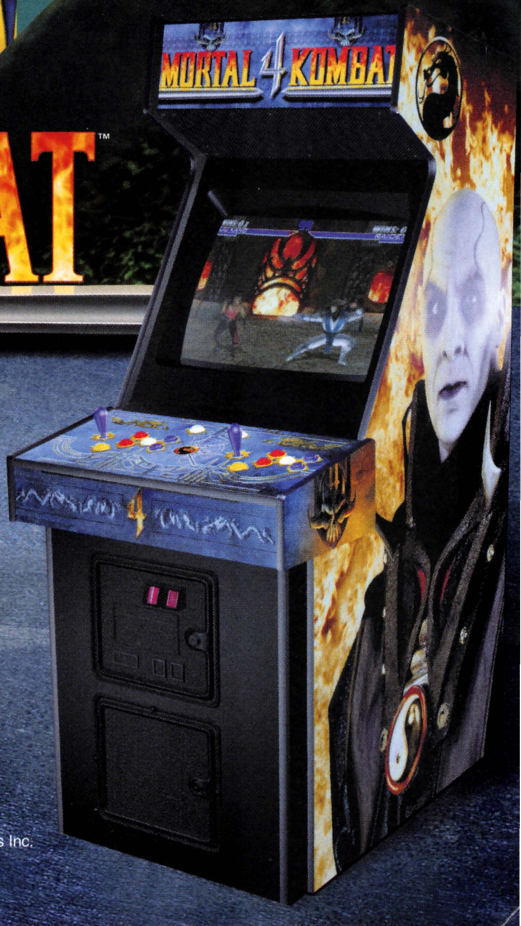
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Ascension develops new laser tag vests

Lazer Runner laser tag system manufacturer Ascension Productions of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, has developed a new laser tag vest that can be programmed to display one of four colors (red, yellow, green, blue). Operators can program the vest via touch screen monitor using a specialized LED installed in the vest along with a newly developed circuit board.

The new technology cuts considerable costs for Lazer Runner customers since they no longer have to buy individual vests in each of the colors. The circuitry is assembled at the Lazer Runner warehouse which ensures lower costs and in-house quality controls. For more information, contact Ascension Productions, (403)496-9058, e-mail (lazer@lazerrunner.com), or visit the Web site (http:www.lazerrunner.com).

Midway reports growth for last financial quarter

Midway Games has reported a 117 percent increase from the previous year during the fourth and last quarter of its fiscal year, which ended at the beginning of July. Overall, the company reported a 58 percent increase in revenue compared to the prior fiscal year.

Home video game sales reported a154 percent increase in the final quarter, while coin-op games saw an increase of 102 percent during the same time period. For the entire fiscal year, home sales experienced 43 percent higher revenues, while coin-op games reported an 84 percent increase.

In related news, the board of directors at WMS Industries, which spun off Midway Games, has approved the redemption of 33 percent of its $57.5 million of 5-3/4 percent convertible subordinated debentures due 2002.

Correction

In a special feature on bulk vending in the August issue of *Play Meter* (p. 100), the phone number for Gizmo Distributing, maker of the kinetic *Gumball Gizmo* machine, was listed incorrectly. The correct phone number is (800)872-1500.

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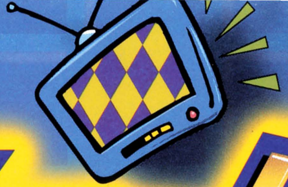

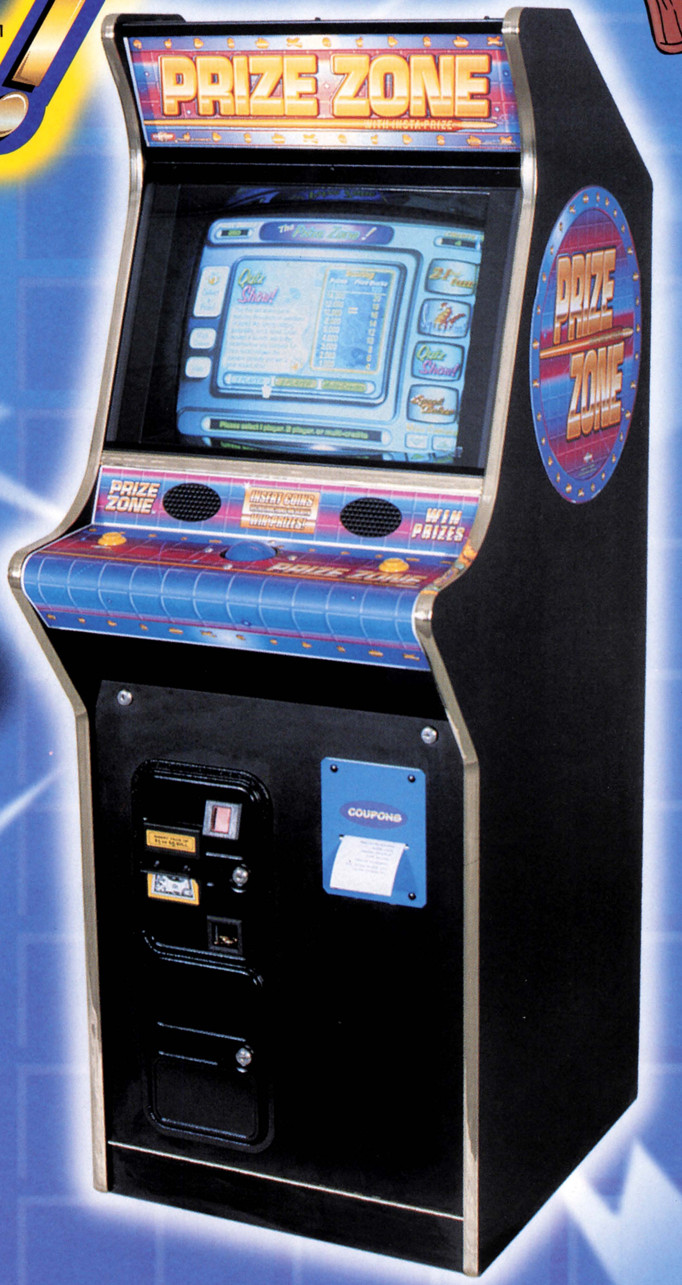

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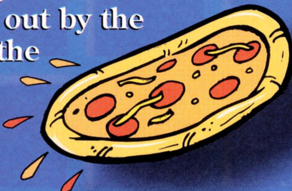

PRIZES: Up to 15 different prizes can be used. No merchandise counter is required. Most of the prizes can be the items that are already sold at the location, such as food and drinks. Payout %'s are completely adjustable.

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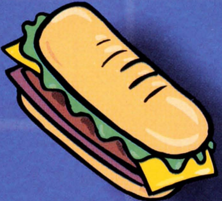

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Vending machine cashes in on popularity of cigars

The East Coast firm Cigar Vend has introduced a vending unit that will help operators take advantage of the current cigar craze sweeping the nation. With its compact size, the company says the unit will meet with success in locations as diverse as restaurants, hotels and bars as well as adult clubs, airports, golf courses, and race tracks.

Designed to eliminate over-the-counter sales concerns, the unit will keep the product safe, fresh (via a built-in humidor and vacuum tubes), and easy to purchase. While the unit was originally built as a countertop unit, it can be purchased with an optional stand that comes in three models: woodgrain, accessory display, or extra inventory humidor.

Cigar Vend comes standard with a four-bill acceptor with stacker and allows the operator to set pricing from $1 to $99. Four different types of cigars can be dispensed, regardless of size, and each includes space for complete descriptions for the discriminating buyer.

Other features include full accounting displayed on LCD readout, on-screen programming including input for special location messages, and a simple mechanism design that has been tested on location. For more information, call Cigar Vend at one of its three offices: New Jersey, (800)979-9801; fax (732)872-0003; Rhode Island, (800)831-2011; fax (401)463-6673; Oregon, (800)987-4946; fax (503)236-5658

The new Cigar Vend unit is designed to capitalize on the current cigar craze.

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LaserTron rolls out laser tag attraction at cinemas

The first Ground Zero, a compact laser tag station from LaserTron, has been introduced at Regal Cinema's Funscape in Wilmington, Del. A high-ceiling deluxe version is scheduled to open at four more Funscapes within the next six months.

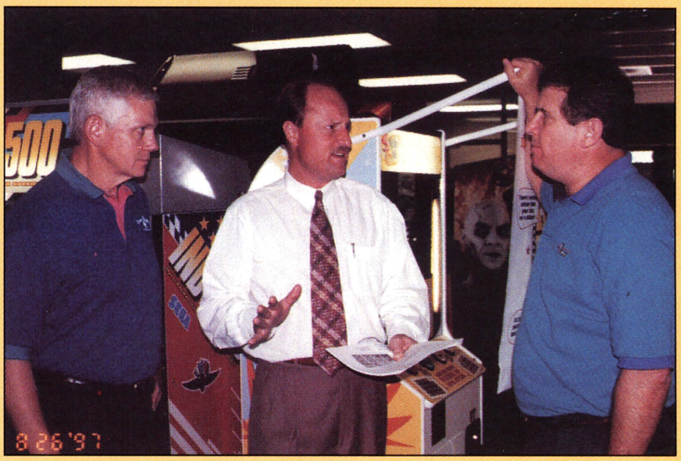
Ground Zero, according to LaserTron, is designed to provide the fun of laser tag in a space of 1,400 to 1,600 square feet of space. A 40-square-foot Ground Zero has 32 player stations, and two teams of up to 16 players each play a six-minute game.

Capacity and throughput are reportedly increased through hardwiring the players to their stations and giving all instructions to the players before and during the game, thus eliminating the need for instruction and vesting space.

While the game is fast paced in its play action, there is no running involved. Guests play from fixed stations which allows the inclusion of players of different ages without the risk of injuries, LaserTron says. Two of the player stations are handicap accessible.

The complete turnkey package includes: targets and all other game equipment, graphics and signage, team scoreboards, special effects lighting and a fog generator, a high-end sound system, and delivery and installation. For more information, call (800)488-8766; fax (716)836-0535; Web site (http://www.laser-tron.com).

Greater Southern hospitality



A mini open house spotlighting the products of Namco, Sega, and Williams-Bally/Midway, was deemed a success with the mood upbeat and the enthusiasm contagious. Greater Southern is gearing up for AMOA Expo '97 this month in its home base of Atlanta, Ga. From left: Larry Brown of Greater Southern, Tom Siemieniec of Namco-America, and Gray Stowers of Greater Southern.

What do You Call 2 Linked

San Francisco RUSH Extreme Racing
LEADER

Simulation Entertainment Group introduces two-seat simulator

Orlando, Fla., -based Simulation Entertainment Group, a manufacturer of state-of-the-art arcade-based simulators, has introduced its new attraction, Chopper Assault, a two-seat interactive coin-op, full-motion helicopter simulator game for the location-based entertainment industry.

Utilizing defense technologies, two players at a time can experience what real U.S. Army helicopter pilots feel while they're on a mission. The entire system moves in accordance with the input of the players (15-degree pitch and roll) on an electric system that can be installed in minutes, according to company president Rupert Meghnot.

The unit takes up less than 60 square feet of floor space and offers an intense PC-based game on a 60-inch screen. Other features include the ability to accept coins, bills, or cards; a sealed mechanical design; and a custom-made two-piece fiberglass shell that will fit through most standard doorways.

For more information, contact Simulation Entertainment Group, 2030 Schoharie Ct., Orlando, FL 32817-4822; (407)658-2635; fax (407)658-6334.

Location to bring new Pastime to Baltimore

Quartertime Amusements recently announced plans to build the largest family entertainment center in the Baltimore area. The new facility will be called Baltimore's Pastime and located at 1040 Marshall St. in a former movie theater in the historic Federal Hill section of the city.

Plans for the 12,000-square-foot center include six indoor batting cages, 15 pinball machines, 20 pool tables, and approximately 125 video games including driving simulators and virtual reality attractions.

All games will be set on free play and the location will charge an admission fee of $7 for adults and $6 for children. Customers will be allowed to play as many games as they want to for as long a time period as they wish.

Quartertime says the hard work of restoring the former McHenry movie theater, including the recovery of exquisite columns and details hidden behind plaster walls and a 40-foot lighted dome obscured by drop ceilings, is currently underway. The building was originally constructed in 1917 and later renovated in 1930. Since the 1970s it has been used by Goodwill Industries.

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Have You HEARD?

☛ Wal-Mart's chain of Radio Grill diners has approved all makes and models of Rowe/AMi jukeboxes for current and future locations.

☛ The West Virginia Music and Vending Association has scheduled its annual meeting and convention Nov. 6-8, Berry Hills Country Club, Charleston, W.V. Items on the agenda include a golf tournament, trade show, board of directors meeting, and general membership assembly.

☛ Thomson Entertainment announced its intention to stamp out cases of bootlegged software and intellectual property violations in the simulation entertainment business. It is currently reviewing a number of potential cases involving both simulation hardware and ride films.

☛ The National Association of Convenience Stores Annual Meeting and Exposition was scheduled to take place Oct. 5-7, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla. In addition to a wide range of exhibits, the event will feature a full slate of seminars.

☛ Myrtle Beach, S.C., will soon play host to the first Bullwinkle's Family Fun Center designed for a tourist market. The location, scheduled to open in January, will include a Frostbite Falls with rolling hills, cartoon trees, and a tower pumping water down the mountain entrance.

☛ Dave & Buster's has announced plans to expand its current chain of 10 locations in the United States with new openings planned in Cincinnati and Denver by the end of this year. Four additional locations will be opened across the country in 1998.

☛ Indy Car analyst and commentator, and former Indy 500 winner Bobby Unser will kick off the third annual Amusement Industry Expo, Oct. 28-30, at the I-X Center in Cleveland as the speaker at the starting line breakfast.

☛ The International Thunderbird Gaming Corp., based in Spartanburg, N.C., has introduced Thunder Watch, a real-time accounting system providing management services for gaming terminals across a local area or wide area network. The system will allow the extraction of accounting, security events, and control functions through a telecommunications network using standard TCP/IP protocols.

☛ Video Vend has moved to a new address: 99-970A Iwaena St., Aiea, HI 96701; (808)487-3919; fax (808)486-5188.

☛ Betson Enterprises held three open houses last month hosted by Betson Philadelphia (Sept. 16), Betson New Jersey (Sept. 17), and New England Coin-Op (Sept. 19). The company's fall dinner was held after the event in New Jersey.

☛ Q-Zar Inc. has changed its name to Q-Entertainment Inc. "The new name reflects our commitment to roll out multiple forms of entertainment including Q-City and Q-Video, our venture with Mitsui," said chairman Tom Bulter. The company also appointed pizza franchise veteran Don Zentmeyer as senior vice president and investor relations officer.

☛ Hasvold Vending Co. has changed its corporate name to Music Service of South Dakota. Staff changes include Troy Oberembt as customer support manager for the Sioux Falls headquarters and Brookings office, Jane Ormseth as office manager in Brookings, and Joe Sefrna as full-time pool and dart league coordinator. Adresses, phone and fax numbers in Sioux Falls and Brookings remain unchanged.

☛ Bob Snyder of Bob Snyder & Associated was selected as a technical presenter at a recently held conference for the Office of the Attorney General, Department of Justice, in California. Over 500 attendees heard his presentation on gaming, methods of cheating, and gambling and amusement crossover issues.

Quantum3D partners with LBE Technologies

Quantum3D's Obsidian family of real-time 3-D graphics accelerators has been chosen by LBE Technologies for use in developing and deploying platforms for its NASCAR Silicon Motor Speedway auto racing simulator, which is slated for a series of themed auto racing entertainment centers across the country.

Obsidian accelerators are based on advanced configurations of 3Dfx Interactive's Voodoo Graphics chipset. Obsidian products enable Intel architecture-based PCs to deliver interactive, visually realistic 3-D graphics at performance levels equivalent to those of high-end graphics workstations and image generators.

Ross Smith, vice president of sales and marketing at Quantum3D, said, "The net result of LBE Technologies' expertise is reflected in their games, which is one of the few places we've seen Obsidian boards used to their fullest capabilities."

Rick Moncrief, chief technical officer for LBE Technologies, commented, "By using Obsidian products, combined with Intel-based PCs, we can hit the cost-per-seat targets that make our products commercially viable."

NASCAR Silicon Motor Speedway puts players in the driver's seat by simulating the exciting world of professional motor sports, including award ceremonies for winners. Each entertainment center will consist of a fleet of motion-based five-channel simulators, merchandise sales area, and plenty of viewing space. Theming is elaborate with auto racing sets and props where guests can observe stock car racing footage. More information is available on the LBE Technologies' Web site (http://www.lbet.com). ▲

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Gerald Goudeau Sr.

"No evil can happen to a good man,
either in life or after death."
–Plato.

A short 18 months ago, Maurene and Gerald Goudeau suffered every parent's worst imaginable nightmare. Their beloved son Guy and Guy's son Gavin were killed in a car accident. Still reeling from that devastating loss, Maurene is now left to face another heartbreaking tragedy, the loss of her husband, who had a fatal heart attack Sept. 9.

Gerald and Maurene celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary in 1990 with their nine children.

In 1947 Gerald owned a gas station and also worked part time for his brother Ross, who had a vending company called Evangeline Novelty. Gerald enjoyed the coin machine business so much that he wanted to operate full time, but he did not want to compete with his brother. His solution was to operate his business, Gerald's Amusements, in an area out of his brother's territory even though it meant hitchhiking to service calls and borrowing his brother's truck to rotate equipment. Maurene, who had married Gerald in 1950, became his reluctant although willing assistant. She was called upon to refurbish equipment (in their living room) and help load it onto the borrowed truck. Remember, this was in the days before lift gates!

By the 1960s, Gerald and Maurene were using their house to raise their nine children instead of repairing games! The business had moved to the current 9,000-square-foot facility, where you still find a pleasant mix of bayou charm and time-proven professionalism. Gerald and Maurene's son David joined the company in 1971, learning the ropes from his father. One lesson was offering top-notch service, a lesson David never forgot. "People are dazzled by new equipment. But once the shine wears off they are hollering for service. We knew we had the service and could sell the games," said David on their decision to enter the distributing business with Southland Distributing. Four years after joining his dad, David moved into a management position. Although David has been running the business for a number of years now, Gerald could often be found at the office heading up home sales and showing lucky customers his collection of vintage coin machines, including the first jukebox he operated, a 1946 Rock-Ola.

Gerald was proud of his collection of classic pinball games.

Bob Nims of A.M.A. Distributors knew Gerald and Maurene from the very early days. "He started in this business a lot like I did, with just a few pinballs. I sold him a ton of pinballs and flipper machines back in the '50s. He worked very hard and it paid off. He loved this business and he loved his family. As the family grew, I remember him laughing that he was going to have to build a bunk house in the back of the house for his sons! He was a devoted family man with a wonderful wife. She supported him throughout his career. I know she must be devastated. Thank goodness she has such a large family."

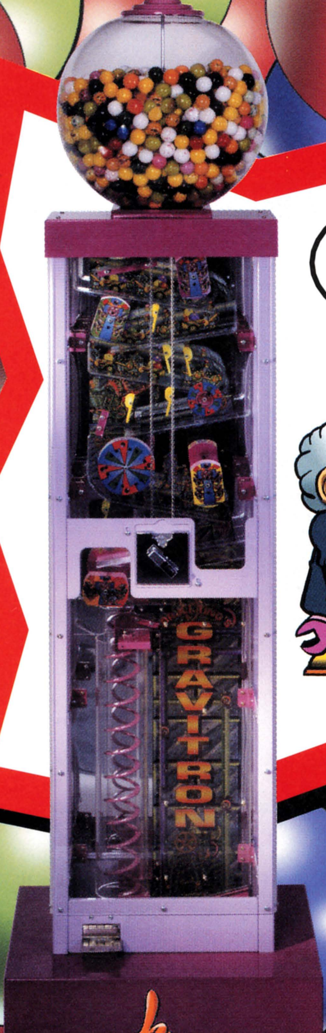
Bob continued, "I'll always remember his sense of humor. Gerald was always playing practical jokes and was always laughing. I got to know him through some Firestone trips we went on. I spent a lot of time with him that I normally might not have had. Everyone who knew him will remember his terrific sense of humor. This is a terrible loss to his family, friends, and the industry."

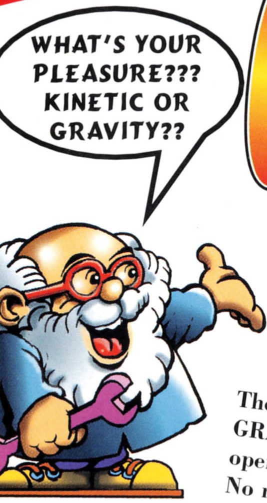
As Gerald is laid to rest, even his funeral was cause to remember his adventurous spirit. An example is flying, but it's not your ordinary story. He bought his first plane for just $200, repaired it, refurbished it, and then flew it to Grand Isle, La., where he enjoyed fishing. That same daring spirit took him to Spain where he participated in a bull fight! Once he even convinced a friend to put engines on their bicycles and travel to Florida.

The employees, who knew firsthand Gerald's love of the industry, had a wreath made entirely of flowers in the likeness of a jukebox. The spray on top of the casket epitomized his adventurous spirit. It was made of cypress in the shape of an alligator with cattails and wheat. He would have loved it!

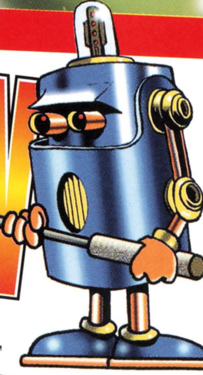
We join the rest of the industry in bidding Gerald a final farewell. His family can take comfort in knowing that Gerald will be welcomed into eternity by his beloved son Guy and grandson Gavin. Take care of each other and rest in peace. As Guy would have said, "We love ya' man."

▲




WHAT'S YOUR PLEASURE??? KINETIC OR GRAVITY??

GRAVITRON



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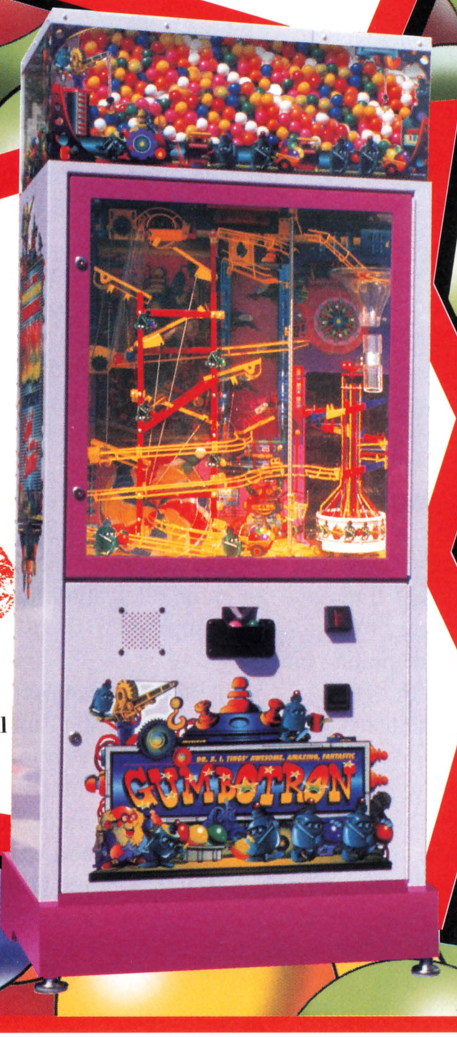
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INTERNATIONAL
SCENE

DAVE & BUSTER'S GOES GLOBAL

Dave & Busters Inc. is rapidly taking its upscale restaurant and entertainment concept to the far corners of the Earth. The most recent announcement concerns a new letter of agreement to develop D&B locations in Taiwan, the Republic of China, Hong Kong, and Singapore, as well as another letter of agreement to develop in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria.

Said Dave Corriveau, co-founder and co-chief executive officer of D&B: "We're encouraged to see the tremendous interest in our concept from the international community. Over the next decade, we anticipate there will be approximately 30 international D&B locations providing great food and great fun around the globe."

Added partner Buster Corley: "With our continuing global expansion we've focused on building partnerships with key players in the countries D&B will serve. We're very pleased to establish long-term relationships with companies that have our same dedication to delivering high-quality food and entertainment to the world's leading metropolitan cities."

An agreement with TaiMall Development Co. will make it the licensee for D&B in the Pacific Rim, where seven locations are planned over the next several years. The first is set to open December 1998 in a suburban Taipei mall. According to Ted Chih-Fan I, chairman of TaiMall, "The idea of combining a contemporary arcade with traditional skill-oriented games like billiards, and including quality American food, really is a concept for the 21st century. I have no doubt D&B will be successful in this market."

In Europe, D&B will work with S.T.A. Salmann Trust Co. to launch its expansion into Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. S.T.A. Salmann was created by George Huber, a restaurant owner and developer with extensive experience in franchising. The company plans to open seven to 10 D&B locations, with the first one in a mall currently being developed in Berlin. Said Steve Kraft, who will oversee these D&B plans, "People in Europe today are looking for quality, exciting American-style entertainment, which is why our company is confident that D&B will have great appeal here."

Also, D&B and Charles Percy & Assoc. in Washington, D.C., will pursue development partners in the Middle East, North Africa, and Turkey. CP&A, founded in 1985 by former Sen. Charles Percy, assists international companies in establishing or expanding operations in Middle East/North Africa markets. Business development projects have included trade, licensing, and direct foreign investment in diverse fields, from telecommunications to entertainment/hi-tech gaming. According to Walt Henrion, director of international development for D&B, "With their strong, established relationships in this part of the world, we feel CP&A is the ideal partner for D&B. We have the concept, and they have the contacts. When you put the two together, it's a recipe for success."

Seven D&B locations will be developed in the region over the next eight years, with the first likely to debut in 1999. Timing to enter the Middle Eastern countries could not be better says Mark Percy, president and CEO of CP&A: "The demographics of the region are really in our favor. Fifty percent of the population is under 25, and most of the countries in which we are interested are very open to business ideas that have proven successful in the United States. This creates tremendous opportunities for a fun and exciting concept like D&B."

Percy also noted the increase in the number of shopping centers being developed in these countries, especially in major cities such as Cairo, Beirut, and Istanbul. D&B locations in U.S. shopping malls (White Flint Mall, Bethesda,

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INTERNATIONAL SCENE

← DAVE & BUSTER'S

Md., and Ontario Mills, Ontario, Calif.) rank among the top three in the chain in sales.

D&B, which was founded in 1982 in Dallas, Texas, opened its first overseas location May 23 in Birmingham, England, the first of seven stores planned for the United Kingdom in conjunction with Bass PLC. There are 10 D&B locations in the United States. Plans include more domestic expansion including new restaurants in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Denver, Colo., by the end of this year plus four more U.S. locations in 1998.

ASCENSION/LAZER RUNNER OPENS IN BEIJING

BATTLE CRUISER
API 6696 07-S

Ascension Productions Inc., manufacturers of Lazer Runner laser tag systems, continues to expand into the Asian amusement market with a new laser tag installation in Beijing, China. The company has sold 16 laser tag systems to customers based out of Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Korea.

Ascension sales manager Doug Wilson says the company's success is due in part to its willingness to adapt to the unique needs of the customers. "Space is certainly at a premium in Mainland China, in particular," says Wilson. "Our portable units have been especially popular as they can be installed in virtually any location. Congested population figures (1.2 billion with a land mass just under 6 million square miles), paired with high property costs, makes portable laser tag systems a welcome alternative for amusement operators."

LIW INKS DEAL WITH SHOWMEN'S GUILD

Independent Exhibitions Ltd., organizers of the annual International Leisure Industry Week, announced an exclusive sponsorship arrangement with the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain that commenced with the LIW show just completed Oct. 2. The Guild, founded in 1889, is the national association representing the traveling fairground industry in the United Kingdom.

This agreement meant the Guild had a significant presence at LIW with a members' executive lounge in the Attractions & Amusements section of LIW's Parks & Attractions show being at the center of its activity. Representatives of the Guild were also involved in other LIW activities, such as the new Board of Patrons, as well as the seminars on safety. The agreement also means LIW is the first organization outside the Guild to have access to its full membership list, which will increase the LIW target audience and provide new opportunities for manufacturers and suppliers at the show.

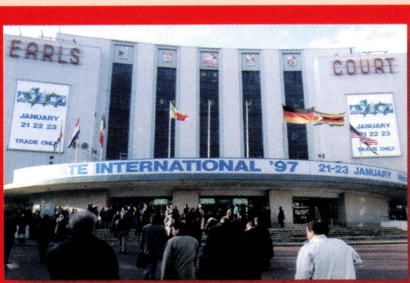
In other LIW news, two prominent members of the amusement and theme park industry in England have been added to the Board of Patrons, which is chaired by Richard Pawley, chairman of the British Association of Leisure Parks, Piers & Attractions (BALPPA) and operations director at the U.K. facility of Drayton Manor Family Theme Park. Additions are Joe Meck, past president of IAAPA and current manager of Warner Bros. Movie World in Germany, and Hans van den Berg, owner and general manager of Hellendoom Avonturenpark in The Netherlands.

Other members already confirmed include David Howell, vice chairman of BALPPA; Keith James, president of the U.S. theme park design company Jack Rouse Assoc.; Lee Howarth of Tornado International Ltd.; and Peter Bobst of Spibox AG, who also represents Vekoma.

LIW included The Funway, a multistory family entertainment center packed with family-oriented electronic entertainment, children's play, simulation and redemption equipment, and special catering for kids in the Fun Cafe. Also included, a U.S. Pavilion and the International Rides Gallery.

MENTOR GROUP MOVES INTO NEW HOME

The Mentor Group (candy jar division) is moving to new headquarters, thanks to loyal customers who helped the company grow. The new address is Bay F, 1120 - 44 Ave. S.E., Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2G 4W6; phone (403)287-7210; fax (403)287-7280. The toll-free number in the United States is (800)536-7354.



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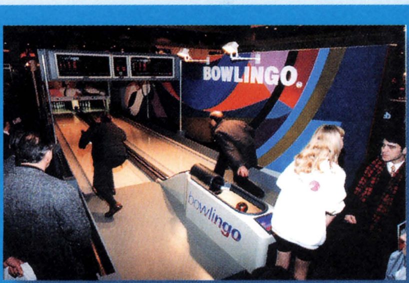
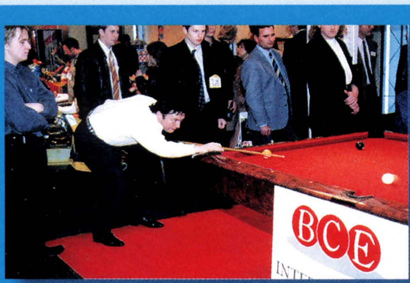


Strike! High impact sports games



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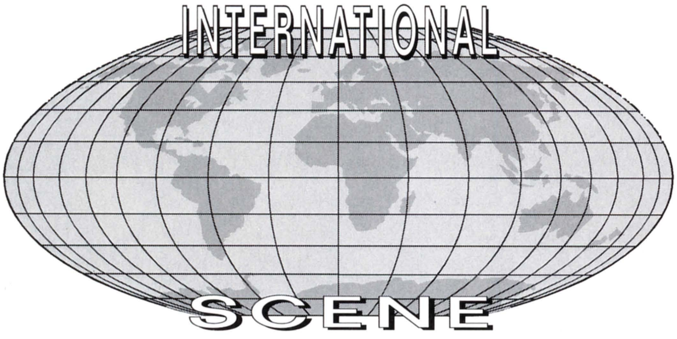

ATEI INITIATES 24-HOUR INFORMATION SERVICE

ATEI's Web site (http://www.atei.co.uk) goes live effective Oct. 1 with two information services designed to keep buyers and exhibitors fully updated on news relating to the exhibition 24 hours a day. Interested parties without access to the Internet can gain similar information by using ATEI's FastFax service by calling +44 (0)990 13 40 30. A ticket registration form and hotel guide will be automatically transmitted via fax within seconds. FastFax also provides the option for callers to receive show information, a floor plan, and a list of exhibiting companies.

Peter Rusbridge, ATE chief executive, explained, "We are pursuing every means to make the ticket registration process as straightforward as possible, In addition, as ATEI continues to grow, with buyers traveling to London from every corner of the globe, it's important that we invest in the show's communications infrastructure. The Web site and FastFax services will enable ATEI to keep its customers informed anywhere in the world, and at any time of the day."

In other ATEI news, the British Tourist Authority (BTA) has agreed to co-fund part of the exhibition's international marketing campaign for the 1998 show. BTA, which is financed by central government, will make a financial contribution for the second consecutive year.

Said Peter Glover, head of business tourism at BTA: "My department's function is to encourage business tourism to Britain, and exhibitions play an important role in achieving this. I believe that any exhibition that boasts over 30 percent international attendance and representation from 103 nations should be pleased with their endeavors. A substantial international visitor base such as ATEI's is excellent news for both the manufacturing and tourism sectors of the U.K. economy."

BTA support in 1997 helped produce significant results. A 10 percent year-on-year increase boosted the number of international buyers traveling to London to a record high of 6,284, according to show organizers. BTA's involvement marks a four-year association with government's Department of Trade and Industry, which helped fund the Inward Mission for journalists and buyers.

ITS BEGINS GOLDEN TEE TEST TOURNAMENTS IN ENGLAND

Incredible Technologies' International Tournament System (ITS) has debuted in England where players in pubs got their first taste of Golden Tee 3D Golf and ITS in a two-week test this summer. Operator Edmonton Machines and distributor Electrocoin worked closely with Incredible Technologies to make sure the tournament went along without a hitch. Two additional test tournaments have occurred since the initial one, and the number of test locations has steadily increased.

Games face competition from the Amusement With Prizes (AWP) machines that are plentiful in Europe. In addition, there is a 17 percent tax on all gross revenue. Still, everyone involved in the ITS tests is encouraged with the potential for both Golden Tee 3D Golf and World Class Bowling.

Initial plans call for separate tournaments in the United States and England, with eventual development of a true international tournament on all machines in both countries once a year. Other countries, including Canada and Mexico, have shown interest in joining ITS, say officials at Incredible Technologies.

REPORTS FROM GAME MACHINE

✈ SNK Corp. of Osaka, Japan, launched its Live Tour '97 to bring the word of the Neo Geo 64 to Neo Geo fans in five Southeast Asian cities: Soeul, Korea; Honk Kong; Singapore; Jakarta, Indonesia; and Shanghai, China. Games on the tour include Samurai Spirit and Round Trip RV for Neo Geo 64; Hazard Zone and King of Fighters '97 for Neo Geo; and the Neo Print photo sticker machine.

✈ The Computer Entertainment Software Association recently announced the establishment of an ethic code for images in home video software, intended to be a standard and control violent and pornographic images.

✈Konami and Namco will not participate in the second Asia Amusement Machine Show slated for Nov. 14-16 in Singapore and sponsored by the Japan Amusement Machine Manufacturers Association. AAMS was held for the first time (last year) in Hong Kong. There has been some confusion over the original intent of the show, which is open to the public. Other factors to consider: the show stimulated player interest and was soon seen as less of a forum for introducing new product. And, since the show is open to the public, Singapore authorities will prohibit the showing of gaming devices. Among the companies scheduled to exhibit in Singapore are Asahi Seiko, Capcom, Data East, Jaleco, Sega, SNK, Taito, and Tecmo.

BAR AND GRILL
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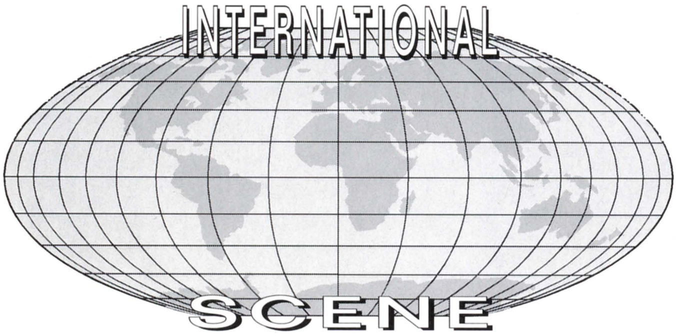


Ted Schweitzer of Southgate Amusement & Vending in San Antonio, Texas, and Jacob Shemaria of Mexel/Moy in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico by Konami's *GTI Club*.

EXIME BOUNCES BACK WITH MEXICO ECONOMY

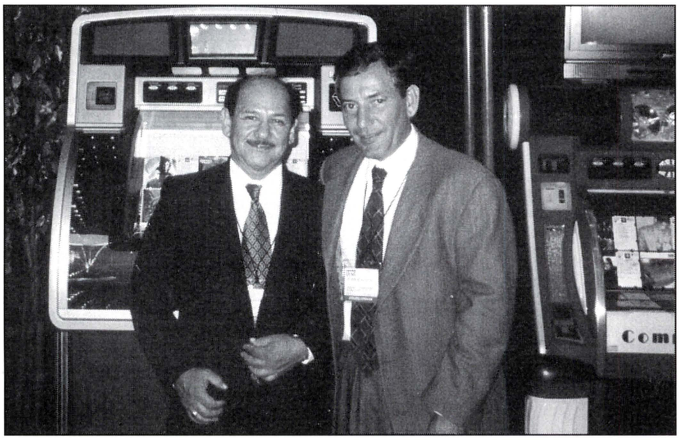
Improvements in the local economy resulted in an expanded and better attended Exposicion Internacional de Maquinas de Entretenimiento (EXIME) Aug. 13-14 at the World Trade Center in Mexico City. The show is sponsored by the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA).

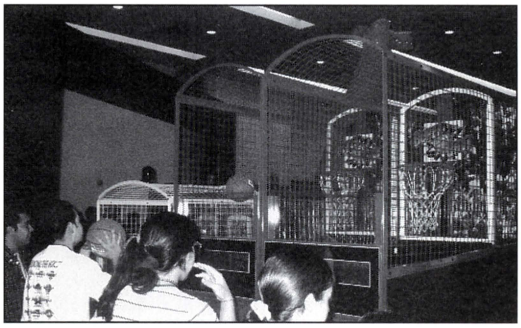
Stated Bob Fay, AAMA executive director: "We had anticipated a stronger show this year with the economy in Mexico making a comeback; however, the increased attendance by both exhibitors and attendees exceeded our own predictions." According to Fay there were over 2,156 attendees, up nearly 40 percent from last year, and 42 exhibiting companies.

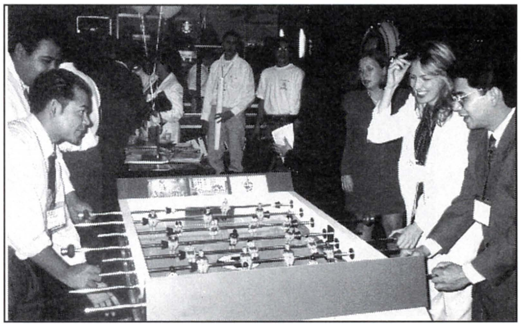
In 1996 the show followed a table-top format without a full-blown exhibit hall. This year the show was a full product exhibition to match the rapidly recuperating economy and in anticipation of increased opportunities. Show organizers said the true measure of the success of the event came when exhibitors requested an additional day next year to conduct business. A survey about a three-day show will be sent to exhibitors.

Seminar programs also were well received and covered a variety of topics, from redemption and kiddie rides to jukeboxes and video games. Show dates for 1998 are Aug. 5-6, again at the World Trade Center. For more information, contact W.T. Glasgow Inc., (708)333-9292 or fax (708)333-4086.

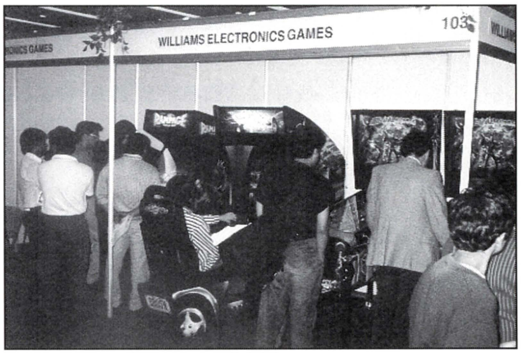
Photos from EXIME provided by Jacob Shemaria of Mexel/Moy Mexico.


At the Rincon Musical booth (Rowe distributor), (l-r): Enrique Calderon and Jose Maria Gayol by the *Starlight*.


Attendees sample Skee-Ball's *Super Shot*.


Foosball drew smiles all around during friendly competition.

ICE's *Tickets 'n' Tunes* and *Cyclone Jr.* were on display, as well as Sega's *Super GT* and P&P's *Police Trainer*.


At the Williams booth attendees engage in *Rampage World Tour*, *Cruis'n World*, and *Medieval Madness*.

Press Release

American Changer introduces it's FREE PLAY coupon.

A promotional tool with applications for everything from the largest F.E.C. to small game rooms at the local hotel.

You can now set your American Changer to accept your personalized **FREE-PLAY** coupon and give out the same number of tokens as if the customer would have inserted a $1.00 bill.

If you are giving 4 tokens per dollar, when your personalized **FREE-PLAY** coupon is inserted your customer will recieve 4 tokens as if he had inserted a $1.00 bill. Likewise if you have your American Changer set to dispense 6 tokens per dollar accepted your American Changer will give 6 tokens if a **FREE-PLAY** coupon is inserted.

For those large F.E.C. with special promotions you can have a dedicated American Changer that accepts **FREE-PLAY** coupons only and for every **FREE-PLAY** coupon accepted you can preset the changer to give out up to 31 tokens.

What a great promotional tool.

If you have a large group coming in for a birthday party you can give them one or two **FREE-PLAY** coupons as part of the promotional package to get them started.

It can be used in a mailer to local residences in your area. A hotel with a game room can give one free play coupon to every child in the family as an incentive to get them to the game room.

A local pizza shop could use them in a mailer to get people to come in and play one of the video games as they wait for their order.

The possibilities are endless...

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INTERNATIONAL SCENE

LAI AND AYALA ENTER JOINT VENTURE

Australasia interactive entertainment giant Leisure and Allied Industries (LAI) announces a joint venture with Ayala Land Inc. of the Philippines to form Leisure and Allied Industries Philippines Inc. The estimated worth of the venture is $50 million.

The new entity will receive an exclusive license to operate Timezone interactive entertainment centers in the Philippines plus exclusive distribution rights for all LAI products. Ayala is the Philippines' largest public company with market capitalization of over $9 billion. Its principal business interests are in property development and management, taking in the country's largest shopping malls.

The development plan calls for the opening of 45 Timezone centers over the next five years. The manufacturing of interactive entertainment equipment in the Philippines will also be considered in the future. This is one more step in LAI's growth. The company recently announced a joint venture with New Zealand's largest interactive entertainment provider, Coin Cascade.

The number of Timezone centers has risen to over 100 and employee numbers rose by 30 percent to a total of 1,300 in four countries. In January this year LAI opened its Singapore flagship Timezone at the White Sands Shopping Centre in Pasir Ris. Three more Timezones will open in Singapore in the next two months, with 10 expected to be operating by the end of 1998.

And in Indonesia, where LAI establishes its first international joint venture with the Matahari retail group, the company has exceeded expectations with the opening of 42 Timezone locations in two-and-a-half years and an average of three to four new ones opening each month. Work is currently underway in Indonesia on a facility to manufacture interactive games.

This month LAI plans to relocate its head office and R&D operations in a new $12 million facility in the Perth suburb of Welshpool, Australia. ▲

Merit Industries, Inc.

Congratulations on your 20 years
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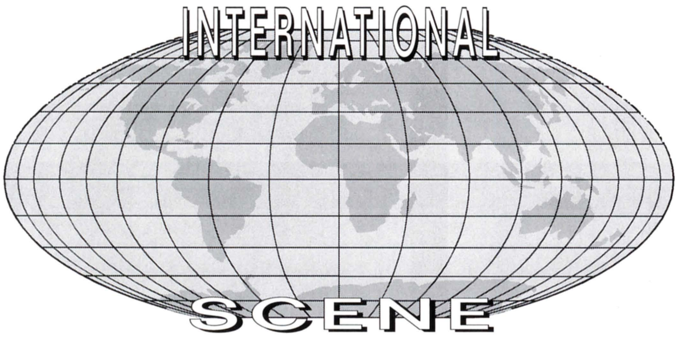


INTERNATIONAL CALENDAR

OCTOBER 5-7

EELEX '97, Expo Centre, Moscow, Russia. Call +7-812-315-5740; fax +7-812-315-6883.

OCTOBER 16-19

ENADA '97, Rome Fairgrounds, Rome, Italy. Call +39-6-88-473217; fax +39-6-440-2718.

OCTOBER 21-24

Amusement Park China '97, China World Trade Center, Beijing, China. Call or fax +86 10 6501 4589.

OCTOBER 24-26

5th Park Show, Rimini, Italy. Call Rimini Trade Fair Corp., +39-541-711-240; fax +39-541-711-519.

NOVEMBER 6-9

Australia Amusement Expo, Marriott Surfers Paradise Resort, Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia. Call Ken Priest, 61-7-3841-1021; fax 61-7-3841-1332.

NOVEMBER 19-21

3rd International Amusement Expo and 5th South American Gaming Supplies Expo, Sheraton Buenos Aires Hotel, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Phone and fax: 541-3227039.

NOVEMBER 25-28

Induferias '97, Valencia, Spain. Call Ana Caballero, 96-386-1100; fax 96-363-6111 or 96-364-4064.

NOVEMBER 28-30

GTI Expo '97, Taichung World Trade Center, Taichung, Taiwan. Call Lauren Swartz, +886-2-760-7407; fax +886-2-762-3873.

DECEMBER 9-12

ForainExpo Lyon '97, Eurexpo Lyon, France. Call 33-1-47-56-21-08; fax 33-1-47-56-21-10/20.

DECEMBER 17-20

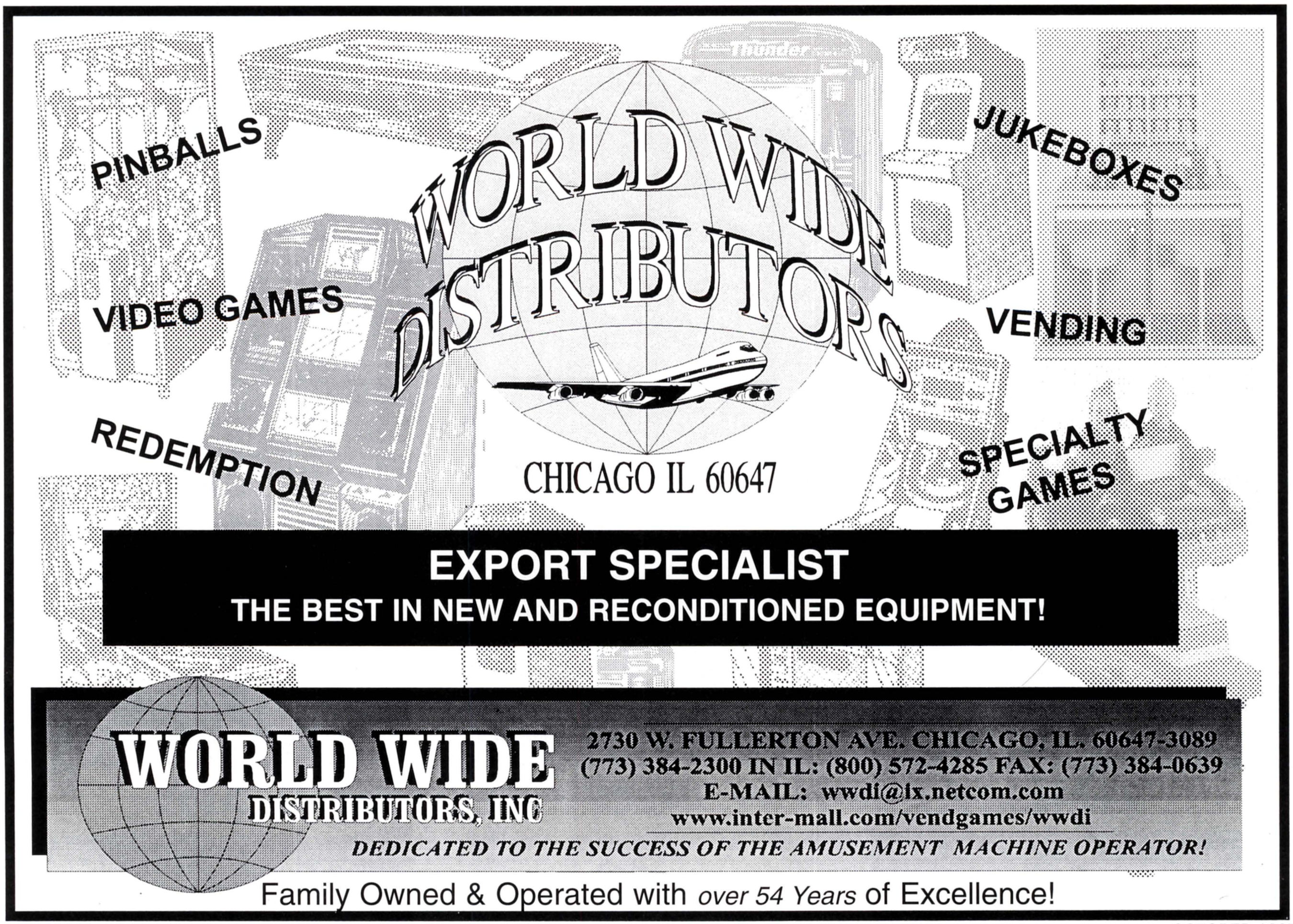
Amuse World '97, KOEX, Korean Exhibition Centre, Soeul, Korea. Call +82 2 551 1126; fax +82 2 551 1311.

JANUARY 22-25

Interschau '98, Nurnberg, Germany. Fax Concord Expo Group (508)371-7121, or call +49 911 86060; fax +49 911 860228.

JANUARY 27-29

ATEI '98, Earls Court 1, London, England. Call +44 171 713 0302; fax +44 171 713 0446.



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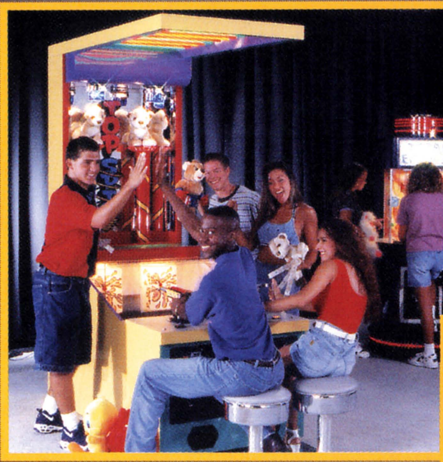

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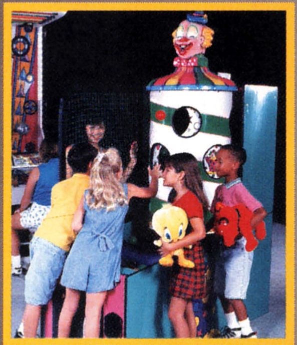

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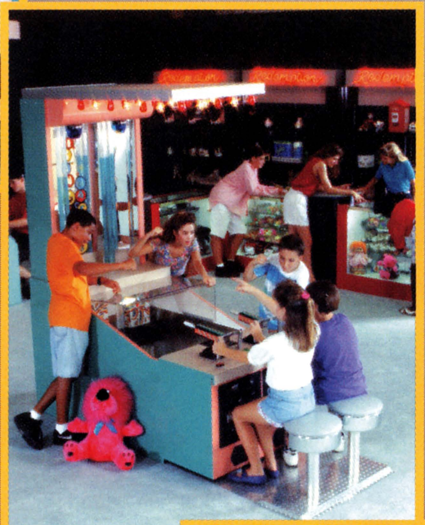

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E-mail: Sales@BobsSpaceRacers.com

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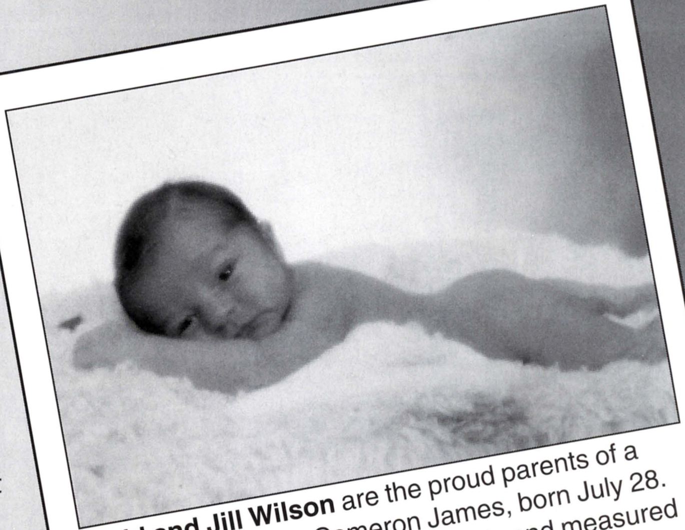
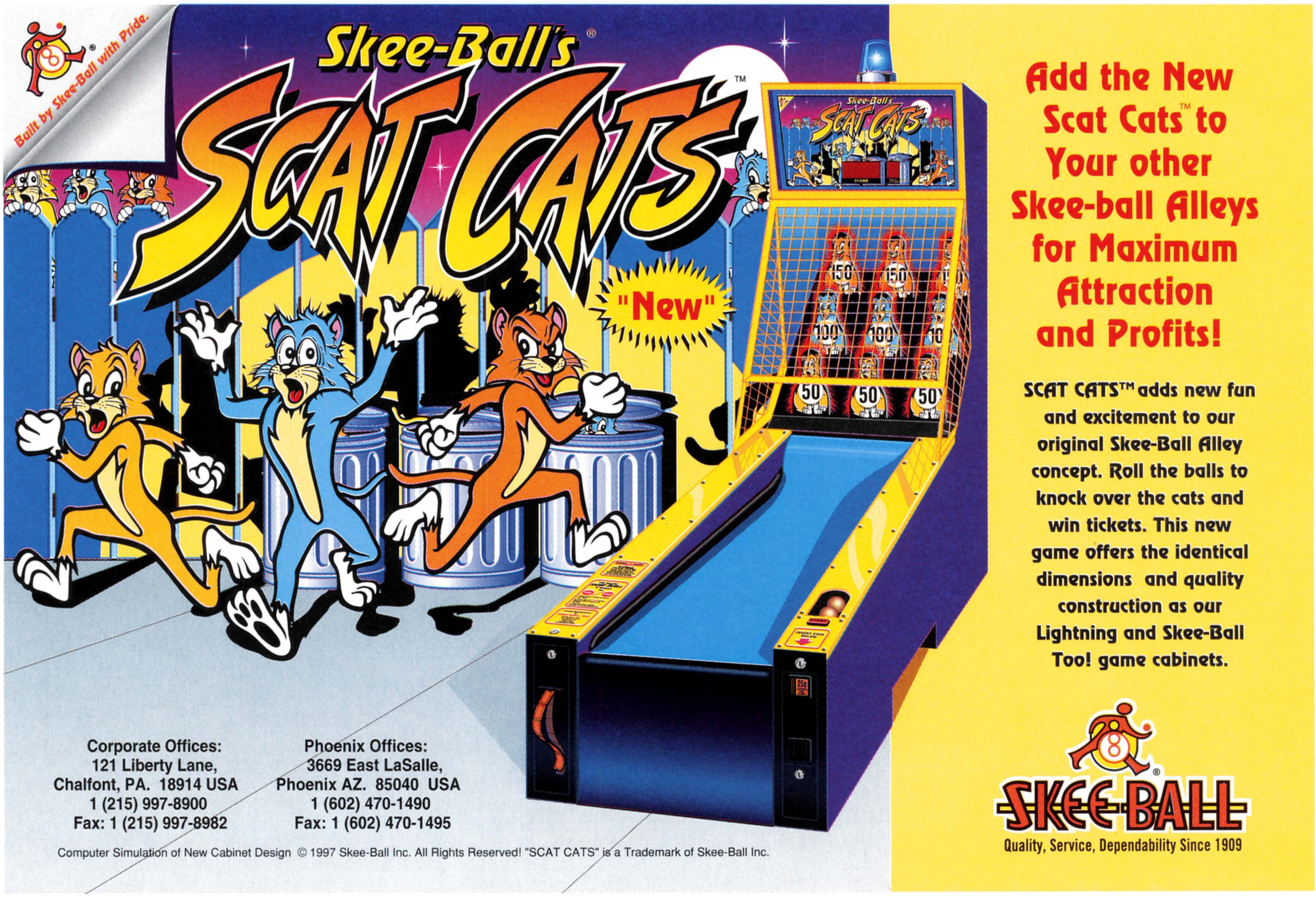
BEYOND THE PLAYFIELD

Carlos LaGuardia, Sega Enterprises USA international representative, married his sweetheart **Stephanie Rossini** Aug. 30 in Chicago, Ill. Congratulations to Carlos and Stephanie. May you enjoy a lifetime of happiness together!



Todd and Jill Wilson are the proud parents of a beautiful baby boy, Cameron James, born July 28. Little Cameron weighed 7.5 pounds and measured 21 inches long. Todd is the controller at Sega Game Sales. All our good wishes to the happy family!



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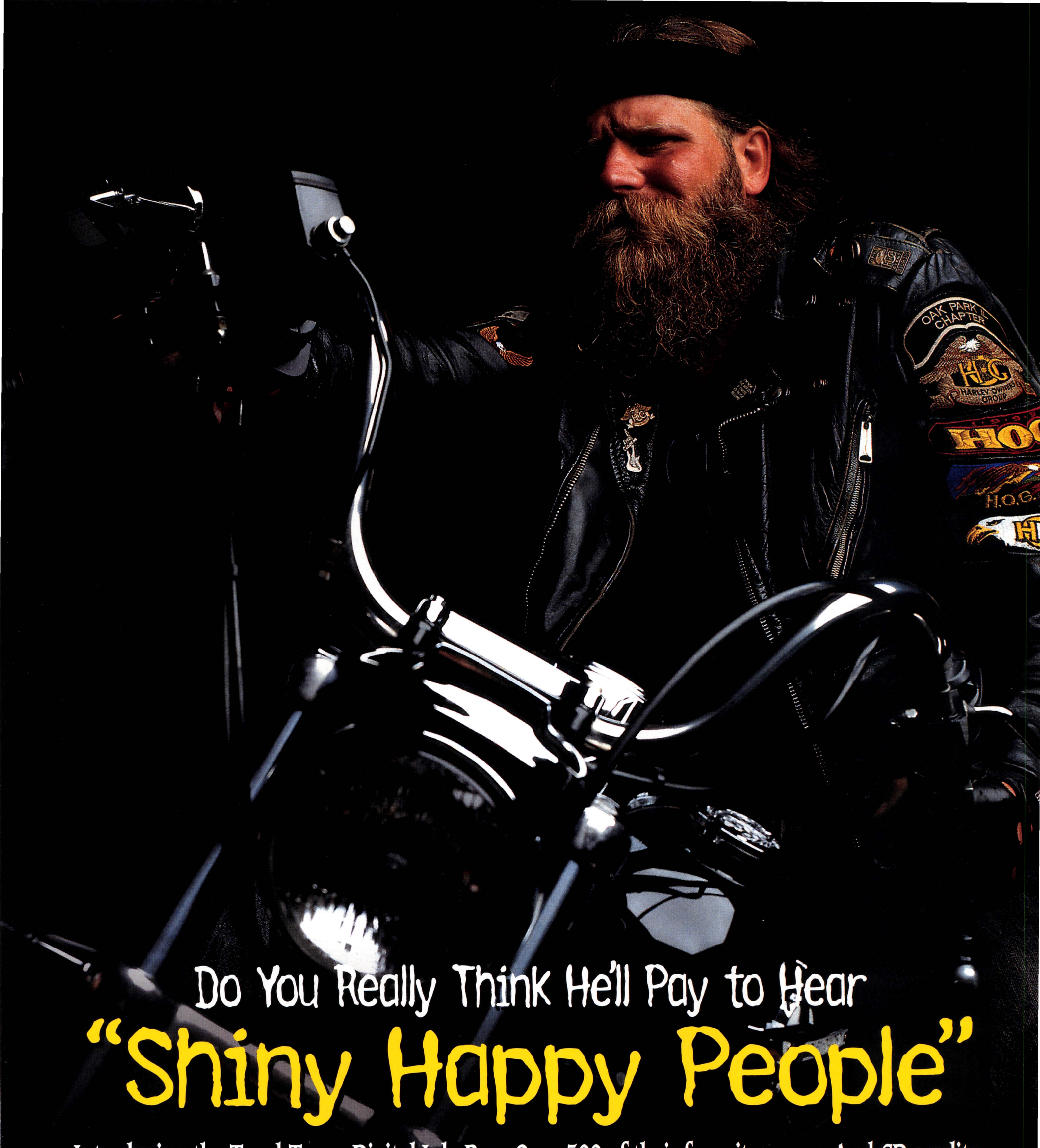
Computer Simulation of New Cabinet Design © 1997 Skee-Ball Inc. All Rights Reserved! "SCAT CATS" is a Trademark of Skee-Ball Inc.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The amazing new TouchTunes Digital JukeBox packs over 500 of the most popular songs, tailored to the location and played with CD quality sound. Patrons can browse the touchscreen, or touch the CD jacket of their choice and then select their song. And new songs can be loaded immediately by phone line to always keep it the hottest jukebox around.

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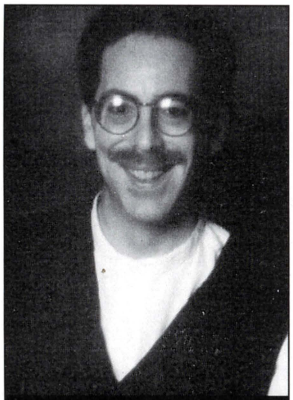
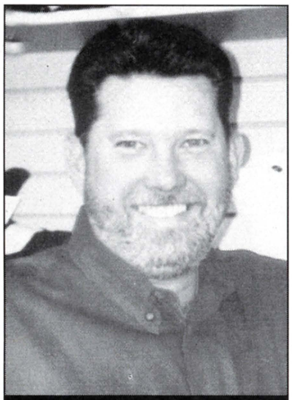
WHO'S NEWS


Lou Rudolph


John Sullivan

Ed Schmidt

LOU RUDOLPH has been named director of sales for Merit Industries in Bensalem, Pa., with responsibility for both domestic and international sales. Lou has literally grown up in the business and logged nearly 30 years of coin-op experience. He first worked as an operator with his father in Chicago, then in distribution with Empire Distributing in Chicago, and later in manufacturing with Stern Electronics. Rudolph also had a tour of duty overseas in Germany for four-and-a-half years when he was with Data East. When he returned stateside he became export manager for Dynamo before taking on a sales post with Merit. He can be reached at (215)639-4700; fax (215)639-5436.

Jewelry, novelty, and plush merchandise supplier HMS Monaco of New York, N.Y., has added **JOHN SULLIVAN** to its national sales force. Sullivan, who was formerly with Success Plush and Laramie Interests, has an extensive knowledge of the industry and all aspects of redemption. Sullivan is ready to answer any questions about the HMS Monaco line. His direct line is (800)686-2885; fax (713)726-0776. HMS Monaco's main toll-free line is (800)777-0901.

ED SCHMIDT has joined the staff of TouchTunes Digital Jukebox as field service manager. Company sales and marketing vice president John Margold said, "Ed brings a new dimension to TouchTunes. He has a wealth of practical knowledge. Most people in the industry know him for his days at Bally pinball and his more recent history at Williams, American Vending Sales, Alvin G., and Capcom." Schmidt began his coin-op career in 1967 as a technical writer for the old Seeburg Corp.

Since 1980 Schmidt has been in volved in customer service, parts, sales, and just about every other support position. His primary responsibility at TouchTunes will be working with the partner operators to provide product knowledge and field support. He will also work closely with Bose Corp. as they put the finishing touches on the TouchTunes jukebox that will be ready for AMOA Expo this month. Schmidt will be located at the new TouchTunes office in Illinois, 1110 Lake Cook Road, Suite 353, Buffalo Grove, IL 60089; (888)338-JUKE (5853).

Huebler Industries of Linn, Mo., has added **KEITH KLIETHERMES** to its staff as national sales manager. Kliethermes will assume the marketing and national sales duties for the company. He commented, "I am looking forward to this opportunity. I am proud to be with such a highly respected company in the billiard industry." Kliethermes is coming on-board at the same time that Heubler is adding a new line of cues, the Missouri line. He can be reached at (573)897-3692; fax (573)897-4255.

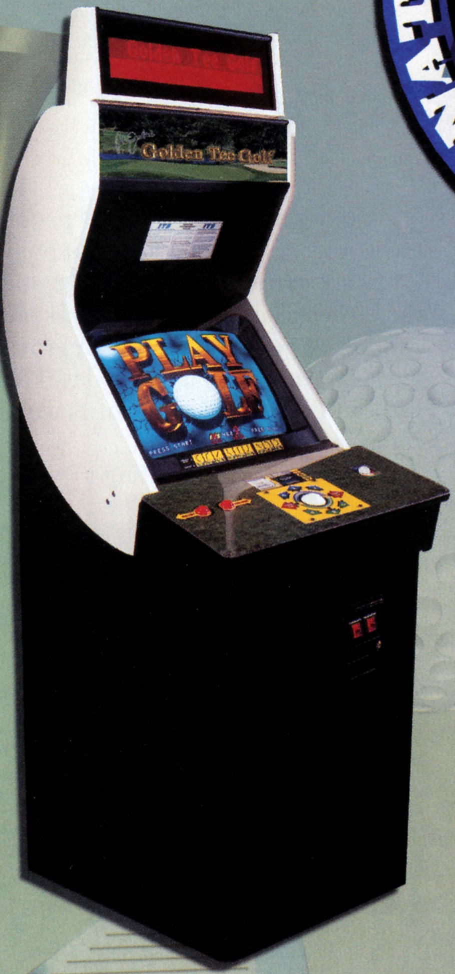
ALEX PERNER has opened his own company, Perner Sales International, to specialize in exporting equipment in the areas of amusement, redemption, supplies, and used gaming equipment worldwide. Perner, whose coin-op career spans 15 years, recently left his position as vice president of international business for R.H. Belam of Hempstead, N.Y., to start the new firm. Working with Perner is Mary Tacury (also formerly of R.H.Belam) and Paulina Perner. Since his departure from his former post, Perner has traveled to Mexico, Colombia, Puerto Rico, and Brazil. He has extensive contacts in the international field and is looking forward to the upcoming AMOA Expo and IAAPA. His office is located in Stewart Plaza, 107-5 Stewart Ave., Hicksville, NY 11810; (516)935-7738; fax (516)935-0247.

Peter Piper Pizza has named **RON STILWELL** to fill the newly created position of vice president of entertainment. Stilwell will work with company management to develop training systems to help the company's franchisees learn more about the games that are an integral part of each restaurant. Stilwell, who has 20 years of experience in the restaurant business, has been involved in entertainment operations for the last seven years. He was able to significantly improve the appearance of the restaurant game operations and redemption centers. Stilwell can be reached at the company's Phoenix, Ariz., office, (602)995-1975; fax (602)995-8857. ▲

IT'S TOURNAMENT TIME

INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT SYSTEM

ITS™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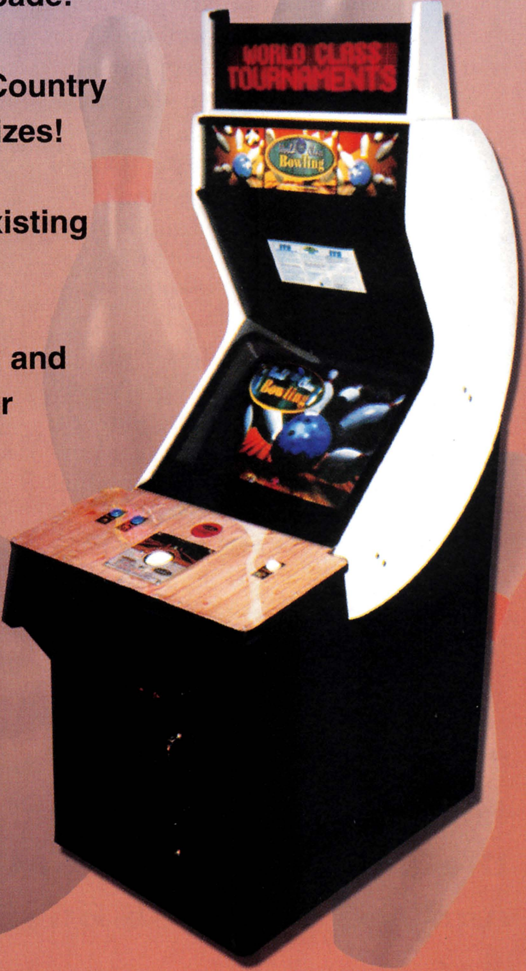
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EYE ON **ASIA**

JEFF **BLAIR** and
TONY **YEH**

Singapore sings an amusing tune

In this era of trade show madness, the Asian Amusement Expo (AAE) stands alone. It is more than just another spacious hall filled with rows of game after game. Sure, there's the normal chaos of intense setup and messy aisles which is transformed just in time to shine on show day. After that, all comparisons with the other trade shows of its kind begin to fade. For this show boasts some of the most exciting "trade" in the industry!

We have become accustomed to a very familiar ritual at these events. Exhibitors man their booths and wait for the searching customers to gather around the latest and greatest. Both hope to land the right deal.

Perhaps the AAE offers a slightly different approach to this age-old way of doing business in the trade show environment. Here customers and exhibitors can conduct a more mutual transaction whereby each hopes to capitalize on the atmosphere. It's a time to explore new relationships and cement the old. It's such joy to watch the hustle and bustle of the local distributors and operators attack the aisles with the pure interest and innocence that only the "new" can display.

We don't mean to suggest that this particular trade show is any better than the others; it's just uniquely different. After all, this show is in Asia and maybe that's why the atmosphere is so different. The attendees are busy with appointments and their style is direct and to the point.

Of course there's time for small talk, but the typical style of the Asian customer is to quickly go about his business. Put that style together with a relatively new group of amusement players and the atmosphere is electric.

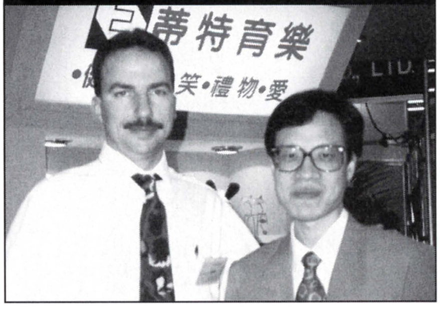
After spending quite a bit of time in Asia on this trip, it's easy to see why the trade show takes on this atmosphere. You can literally see servers in the restaurants running through the dining area to serve customers quickly. Hotel workers of every description flock to assist, almost sensing help is about to be needed.

Custom shirts and suits are made to a perfect fit in a day, neatly pressed and packaged as if just arriving on the department store's rack! The whole routine in Asia seems to be quick. Amazingly, it's all done with a great deal of politeness.

That sort of attitude is surely needed in this part of the world if people are going to live and work happily. Cities are extremely populated, traffic can be hectic to say the least, and some conditions could use a little improvement. But in spite of it all the day flows with an order that is out of place in comparison.

Many times while sitting in traffic

Entropy International and Entropy USA have been in the amusement industry for more than 20 years. Tony Yeh is vice president of marketing for the international company and Jeff Blair is the chief operating officer for the USA group. Entropy is involved in the design and manufacture of coin-op games and parts. They can be reached at (908)506-0002; (800)241-0633; e-mail (entropyusa @sprynet.com); Web site (entropyusa.com).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"We heard plenty of positive comments from exhibitors praising the quality of the show, the size of the attendance, and the attendee buying power."

COMING SOON
TO A MAILBOX NEAR YOU
The
PLAY METER
State of the Industry Survey

you can only imagine how different this scene would be if transplanted to another part of the world. But here, chaos is normal and people go about their business with it all in stride.

This year's AAE show was held in Singapore instead of its previous location of Hong Kong. In general terms there didn't seem to be a noticeable or significant difference with the change of venues. Certainly the show took on a larger appearance, as well it should considering that 100 more booths were sold for the '97 AAE.

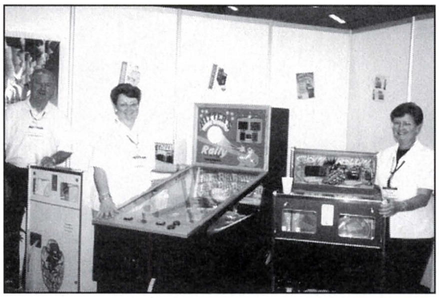
One drawback was perhaps that the space was split into two halls. Although the two were open to each other to become one large space, you could not help but wonder if the additional space was as active as the main hall.

Overall we heard plenty of positive comments from the exhibitors praising the quality of the show, the size of the attendance, and the attendee buying power. Perhaps this show is an indication that the industry is on the rebound after some unstable times. One thing is for sure, the amusement industry is alive and well in Asia. In spite of Taipei still trying to reopen, the region is thriving on America's latest releases.

In general, it seems that we best learn from others. With the upcoming trade show season about to launch in America, we could bring home some important lessons from our friends across the pond.

It's refreshing to see the enthusiasm of buyers again, encouraging to see manufacturers eager to enhance business, and most important, it's delightful to watch the pure joy of a child playing a new game for the first time. We know this is big business with a lot at stake, but it's so easy to forget that our success largely depends on the child's interest in what we produce! ▲

AAMA signed an agreement to sponsor Taiwan's newly formed Taiwan Amusement and Music Association (TAMA), (l-r): Tony Yeh of Entropy International, TAMA chairman; Hung Chyin Chwan, TAMA president; Bob Fay, AAMA executive director; and Ron Carrara of Lazer-Tron, AAMA secretary.

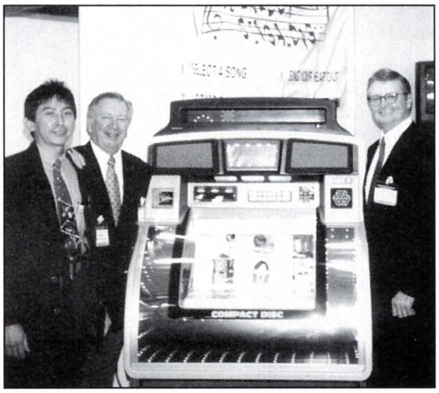


At the Seidel Amusement booth, (l-r): Bob Rakel, Fran Rakel, and Phyllis Seidel with *Smokin' Token, Hitter's Rally,* and *Goin' Rollin'.*

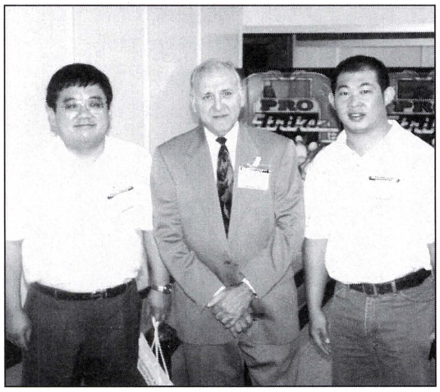
Next to *ICE Ball* are Joe Coppola (l) and Gene Brogowski (r) of ICE with AAE visitors.

SKEE BALL
LIGHTNING

In front of *Scat Cats, Skee Ball Lightning,* and *Super Shot Jr.*, (l-r): Tom Kane, an attendee, and Dan Packowski.



By Rowe's *Starlight,* (l-r): an attendee with Rowe staff Rex Yarnell and David Sadler.



Larry Berke (c) of Design Plus Industries shows *Pro Striker* to visitors.

MUSIC
Junction

Kevin Moss (l) of Worldwide Leisure with Jimmy Koh by the *Music Junction.*

COVER STORY

Williams Bally Midway

www. wms.com

Williams' Rachel Davies takes a closer look at some trends and opportunities for street operators, as well as some simple things that a street operator can do to increase the profits on their route.

COVER STORY

Changing conditions create opportunities for street operators

Rachel Davies, director of sales
Williams Electronics Games and Midway Games Inc.

Change is inevitable in all parts of business and life. Street operators in our business have felt big changes over the past few years as advances in technology and changes in culture have resulted in a very different business environment. While others have been forced out of business because of these changes, some operators have seen their business prosper, adding significantly to the size and income generated by their routes.

What's the secret? I've found that the most successfull street operators embrace change, recognize trends, and alter their businesses to meet cultural entertainment demands. An operator must stay aware of the business climate on his route. When a convenience store closes on one corner, a new sports bar may open down the street. No door closes without another one opening. The smart operator watches for the new opportunities instead of focusing on opportunities lost.

Off Road Challenge is a driver that appeals to all players.

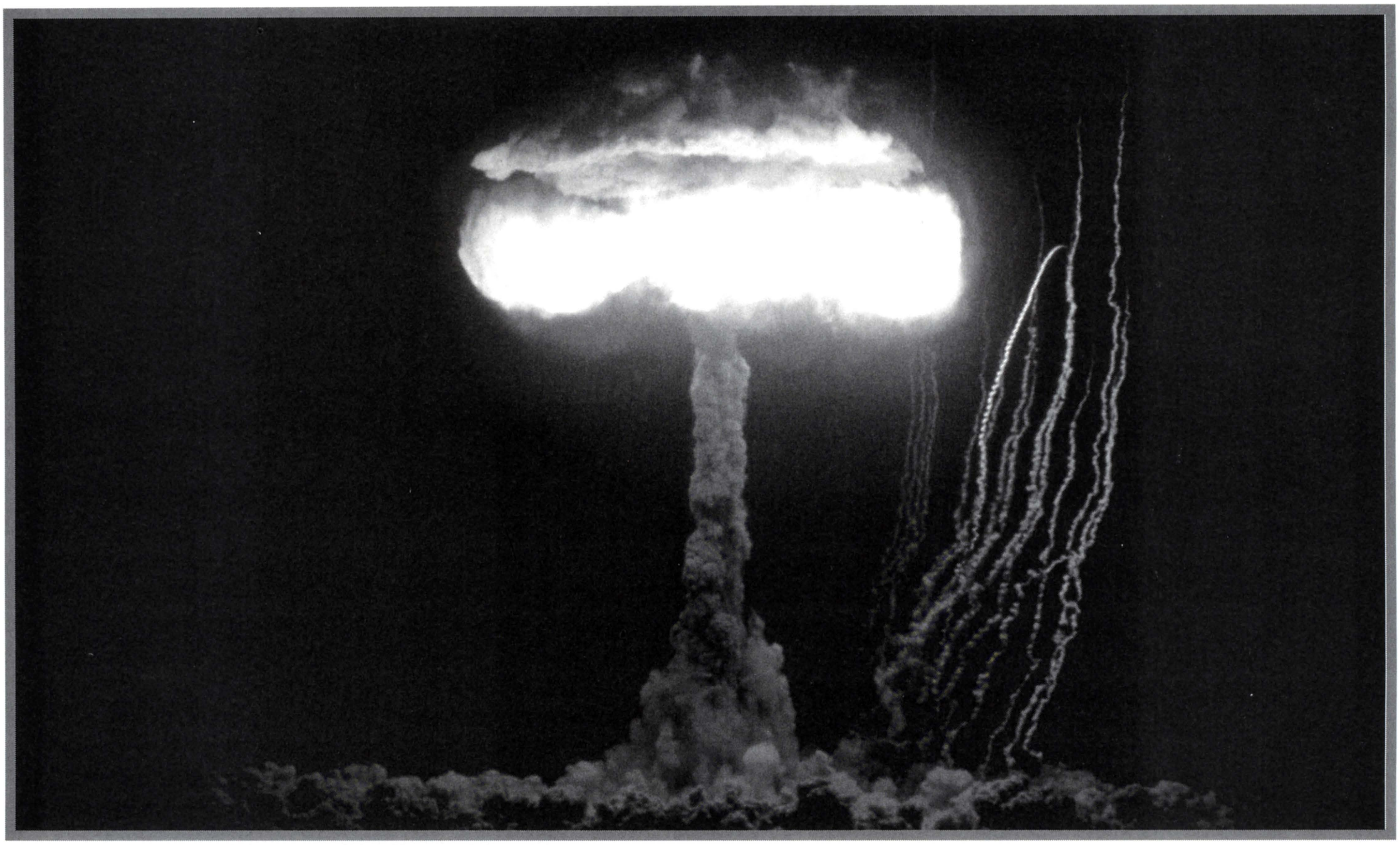
MIDWAY
CHALLENGE
MIDWAY RACING

Cultural changes

Sociologists and marketing gurus will tell you that it is an ideal time to be in a business that provides entertainment for people outside of the home. It is widely believed that our culture is at the beginning of a new entertainment era. We are coming out of a "cocooning" stage where we stay home for entertainment. With the ability to conduct all work and personal business from our desktop - office communications, banking, shopping, international business - Americans are suddenly getting anxious to go out in the world for entertainment. We embrace the chance to work from home but are hungry for entertainment and social interaction out in the real world. Coffee shops, juice bars, and book stores are opening at a rapid pace. They have all become social meeting places. They are all prime locations to add to a street route.

Why not a countertop game or pinball at a coffee shop? We need to recognize this new demand for entertainment and take advantage of it to increase the size and profitability of street routes. This is a prime time to expand the number of locations. With our Williams and Bally pinball lines and Midway video product, we have focused on producing equipment that has a wide appeal to attract the largest audience at street locations.

We've found that many new locations welcome the idea of adding a pinball game. Pinball is a classic part of American culture. The most successful street operators recognize that pinball is a good long-term investment. While pinball doesn't provide the immediate collections of some of today's hottest video titles, the latest pins are providing consistent long-term collections and strong resale value. With fewer pinball manufacturers and a reduction in the number of Williams and Bally models produced, pinball's resale value is very high. *Medieval Madness*, the latest Williams



WHY WAIT TILL YOUR SOFTWARE BLOWS UP?

Relying on outdated, unsupported, or bug-infested route-management software is dangerous business. If it blew up tomorrow, what would you do?

Disarm that time bomb by stopping by **Booth 735 at the AMOA show.**

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Medieval Madness is the newest pinball release.

pinball, has a universally appealing theme and wide open playfield that makes the game attractive to novice players. Some of the most entertaining features, like the exploding castle, can be accessed in the first few games. There are still advanced features and challenging shots that will keep players at the game once they start. The net result is a fun game that will attract both advanced and novice players and maintain consistent collections.

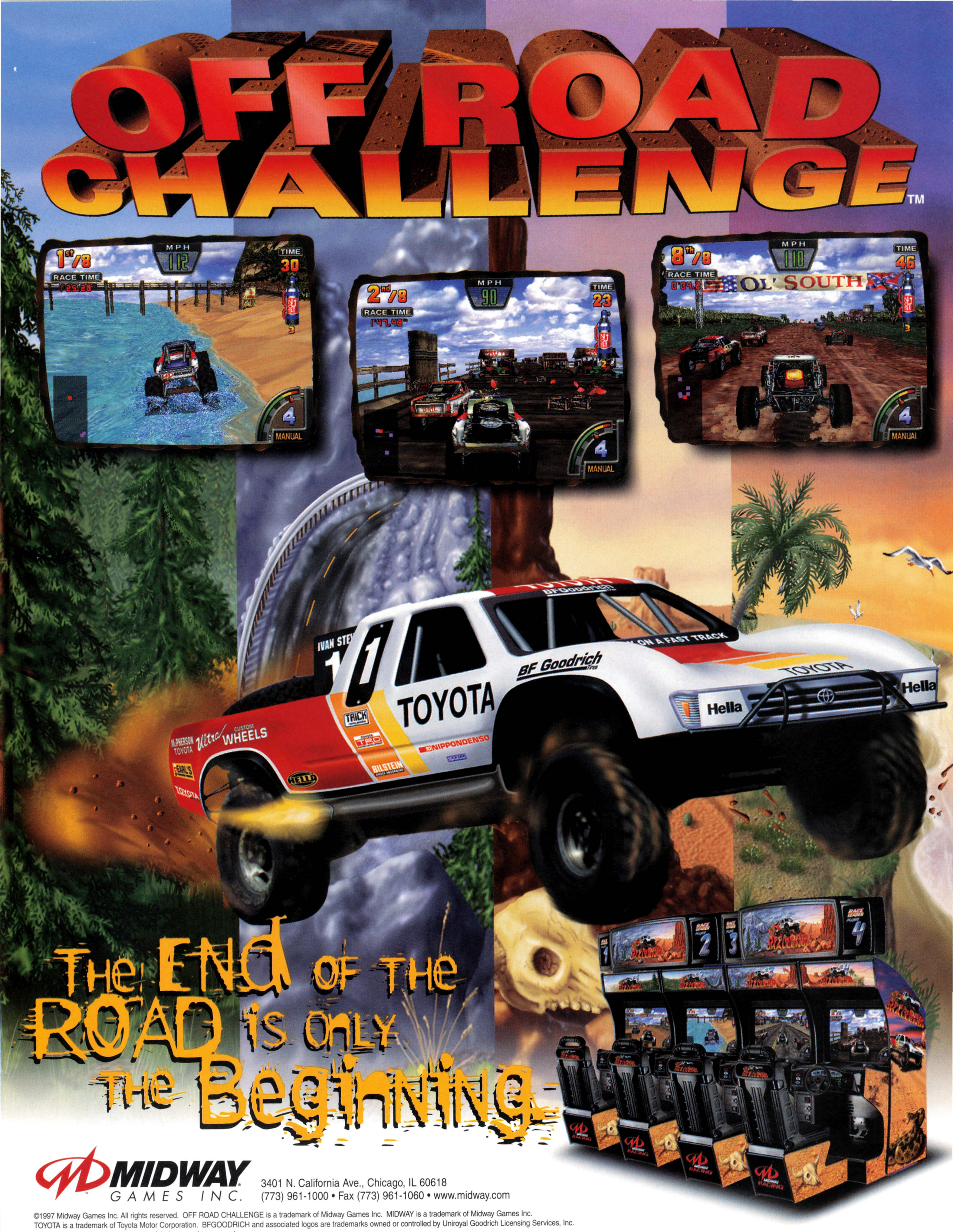
Another essential element to consistently strong pinball collections is preventative maintenance. Think of a pinball game like a car. If you don't change the oil in your car, it will eventually wear down the engine. Pinball is similar - check the flipper coils, change the rubber, wipe down the playfields. Quick, inexpensive, basic maintenance will result in a product that will earn more and be worth more when it comes time to trade it in or sell it to the home market.

With both pinball and video product, there has been a lot of discussion concerning raising the price per play to increase revenue. While this is a concept I endorse, I also think operators need to focus on increasing their percentage split. Many street operators have successfully received a guaranteed weekly revenue or a 60-70 percent take from the cash box on new games such as *Cruis'n World.* This sets the precedent for future product in that location. New games give an operator the opportunity to demand a higher split or a guaranteed income.

Strong investment return at the street location

We recognize that for a video game to provide a strong return on investment for a street operator, it needs a few key elements. First, it has to have a broad appeal and pull from a wide audience. *Cruis'n World,* for example, is a game that a six-year-old could play with his mom at a pizza parlor or a 22-year-old can play with his date at a bar. The game has collected very well at every type of street location. Midway's latest driving game, *Off Road Challenge*, is enjoying the same appeal from a wide audience. Both *Cruis'n World* and *Off Road Challenge* also use Midway's innovative driving cabinet that attracts players yet is easy for

Mortal Kombat 4 utilizes Midway's new Zeuss chip to deliver dramatic game play.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an operator to move in and out of street locations.

The second major element is to price the game affordably for a street operator. Although our engineers are constantly striving to push the limits of technology, we recognize that we have to keep our games priced at a point that makes them attractive to all operators. The Zeuss chip used in *Mortal Kombat 4* is an excellent example of breakthrough technology that was engineered from the beginning to hit the market at a competitive price. Thanks to the expertise of our designers and the capabilities of the Zeuss chip, *Mortal Kombat 4* is the most advanced, entertaining, realistic fighting game ever created. Everything in the game - advanced 3-D movement, new characters, new weapon system, fatalities - makes the game earn better than the competition. This is a simple formula that we strive to hit with every Midway video game.

CATEGORIES
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The *Touchmaster* countertop opens up a whole new category for operators.

Our video product is designed to maintain strong earnings at street locations by giving players what they want. The next major Midway coin-op release, *NFL Blitz*, takes sports video games to a new level by combining fast, hard-hitting NFL action with competitive game play that will attract older players. The game will be very popular with kids at arcades and FEC's, but the head-to-head competition and real NFL players and highlight footage make it ideal for sports bars.

The combination of real NBA action, competitive game play, and some fun fantasy elements (ball on fire, summersault dunks) made *NBA Jam* the number one sports video game. This success is mostly due to the popularity of the game with older players at street locations. New technology has allowed the design team to go even further with *NFL Blitz* including acrobatic catches, wild tackles and sacks, and nine players from each of the NFL team rosters. The real NFL players and footage used to create the game will attract die-hard sports fans. The game is going to be priced very aggressively and should be a very profitable game for street operators. Operators need to make their locations aware of this game and the profit potential it presents for the location.

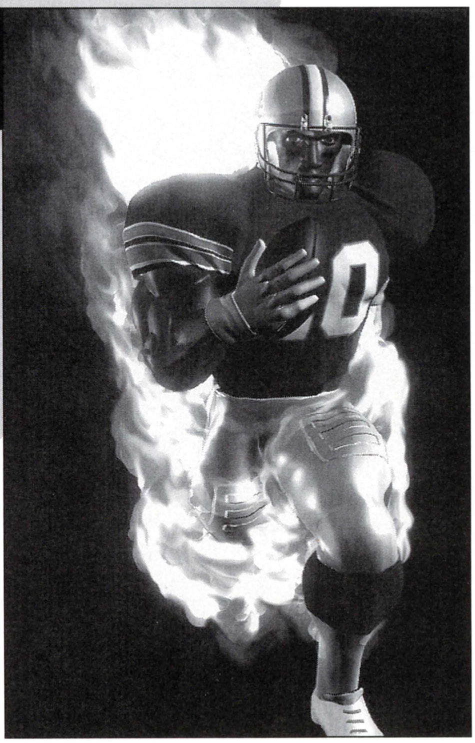
Countertops: a new category

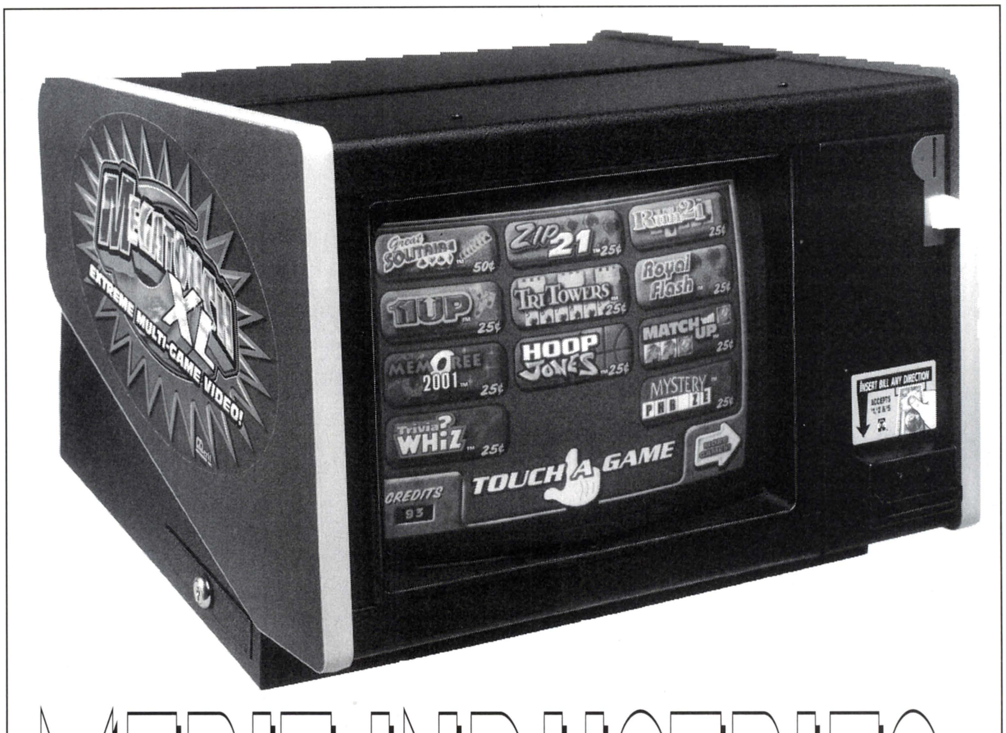
Operators around the world are discovering the strong profits that can be generated with countertop games. These games are showing impressive collections at a wide variety of locations. I've heard of countertops everywhere from a traditional bar to a muffler shop to a doctor's reception area. The key to the success of a countertop game is the software. With our *Touchmaster* countertop game, we recognize that regular software upgrades are essential to maintaining strong collections. You've got to regularly provide new software to keep players interested.

With Midway's history of designing best-selling video software and staff of industry-leading game designers, we are positioned well to produce popular countertop software for *Touchmaster*. We recently started shipping Touchmaster 2000 Plus, and we will debut additional new software at the AMOA show in Atlanta. Operators who already have established routes of one line of countertops could provide the variety necessary for consistent collections by rotating *Touchmaster* into the locations on the route. Give the players new games on a regular basis and you'll see consistent collections from the countertops on your route.

Changes and new challenges present opportunities for street operators. We should embrace the change and expand our vision about where we should operate, what we should operate, and how we should operate. This is the key to becoming a successful street operator. ▲

Midway's newest video is *NFL Blitz*.

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MERIT INDUSTRIES:

a success story spanning two decades

At the end of two tumultuous decades of manufacturing for amusement operators across the United States and around the world, Merit Industries stands poised today to fulfill the same goal that company founder Peter Feuer set forth in 1977: to build games aimed at a grown-up audience.

Feuer, who has a background in engineering, was already a coin-op veteran having started a previous company in 1973 to manufacture remote control wall games around the same time the earliest video games were being produced by Nolan Bushnell at Atari.

The company's first product, a poker game called *Jacks Are Better*, was a solid-state version of a 1950s favorite; Merit followed that offering with a variety of specialty games on the same platform including a horse race game and an attraction named *Crystal Ball*

Today the Bensalem, Pa.,-based company boasts 500 employees, 90,000 square feet of office and manufacturing space, and a dominant market share of what has become an industry mainstay—the amusement countertop industry. Top staff members include director of sales Lou Rudolph, director of engineering Jack Houriet, chief financial officer Don Nogowski, and newly appointed director of operations Don Fahey.

In the early 1980s, Merit introduced its first videos, a series of draw poker and black jack games, such as *Red Dog Poker*, geared toward tavern clientele. The company's first big break came in 1981 when it started custom designing the first multi-game countertop units with color monitors known as the *Pit Boss* series. Merit embarked on the countertop project

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Company founder Peter Feuer (l) with tournament director Bob Wiles.

Director of sales Lou Rudolph (l) and director of engineering Jack Houriet.

Dart software engineers Dean Hedin (l) and John NyDick.

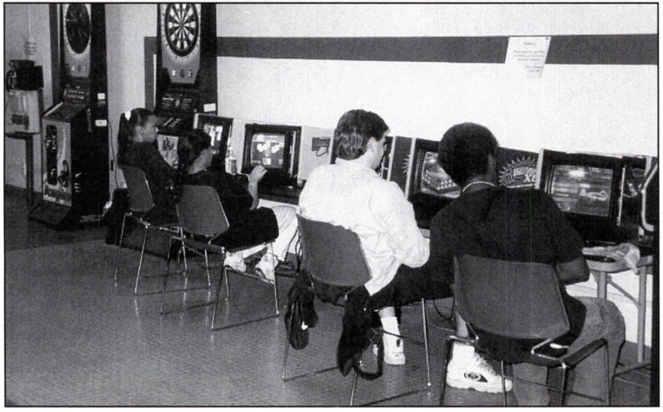
after being approached as a contract manufacturer by a third party.

"The idea was presented to Merit and we executed upon it, but pretty soon it was clear from the market response that this group couldn't handle the potential that was there," Feuer explained. "It wasn't an exclusive deal and we started to develop enhancements to the product and handling our own marketing. Before we knew it we had a tiger by its tail. We didn't really plan it that way, but the market acceptance really made it take off. The product was right, the presentation was right, and the cost was right. It was a surprise.

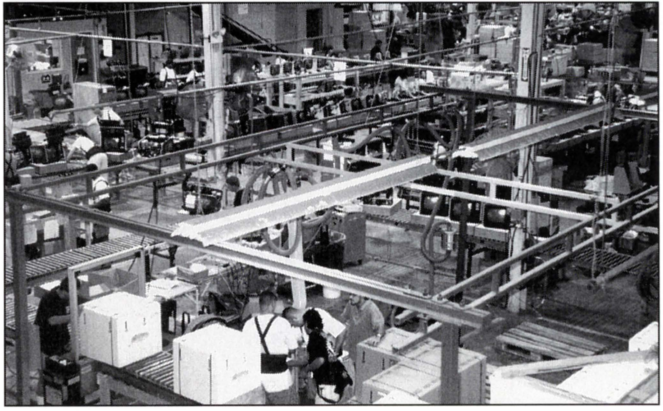
"We put the full force of the technology available behind them and that really opened the door to a broader market base, locations, markets, and areas that previously were unavailable," Feuer added.

Even early in the process of manufacturing countertop units, Merit was faced with backlog orders of 600 to 800 units, and everything from day one was designed in-house based on the company's own microprocessor system. No third-party technology providers were available at the time. "Today some of the technology has evolved where it's much more common to buy existing technology," recalled Hourier. "At that point in the late 1970s or 1980s, there were components available but no one was bundling them the way they do today.

There's never a break when it comes to making entertaining products at Merit.



Merit's manufacturing facility is spread over two separate buildings.



Today we treat PC technology like we treated chips in the old days.”

Since its introduction, the countertop has proven to be successful because it offers operators the ability to operate more than one game in the same cabinet: a mainstream idea today but revolutionary when it was introduced. In short, this allows operators to leverage earnings across a number of entertainment attractions without increasing the needed investment.

“On an individual basis the card games have been the largest drivers of income through the years, however, when we do analysis of collection reports from all over the country you see a diversity in the breakdown of earnings,” commented Feuer. “All of the games contribute meaningfully to the collections, but usually three or four of the most popular card games are on the high end of that.”

> ***“The philosophy of this company is that once you’ve bought a Megatouch product there’s never any need to roll it over.”***

“We also see the same trend worldwide, with card games and the trivia being very popular,” added Rudolph, who started his career with Merit spearheading international sales.

The next big success story for Merit was the trivia game boom, which it helped initiate in 1985 with the introduction of *Trivia Whiz*. “It came along after the slowdown from the boom days of *Pac-Man* and *Asteroids* in the early 1980s, and it had a tremendous run,” recalled Feuer. “The industry was getting into trivia games from a number of manufacturers. We were fortunate enough to have done the right things. We had the right design, play

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features, and database of questions. In all, we had five different versions of trivia."

"On the heels of that we did a game called *Phrase Craze*, which was something like Wheel of Fortune or Hangman, but had our own unique features," Feuer continued. "Then we did *Match `Em Up*, done in a unique innovative way for video."

> ***"A fair amount of technical learning and research went into learning how to use the CD-ROM effectively."***

This trend in trivia games, coming on the heels of the already successful introduction of the countertop at the beginning of the decade, set the stage for Merit to move into the dominant market position that it enjoys today.

"Around the end of that period, the technology had further evolved through the availability of more powerful processors and cheaper memory, where we could combine all these previous trivia games, quiz games, and amusement card games into one multigame family, all for the price operators had paid for a single game," said Feuer.

Darts and table hockey

The 1980s also saw Merit enter the electronic dart market, introducing its *Bullbuster Darts* in 1985. "All the basic marketing aspects seemed to be a good fit with the Merit product line and the customer base that was loyal to us," recalled Feuer.

However, some of the early dart machines sported features that were considered "too advanced" at the time and had to be shelved for several years. "Some of those things have just been introduced in recent years," noted Houriet, who headed up Merit's dart initiative.

The following year Merit purchased dart manufacturer Nomac to help bolster market share in the United States, having already made significant inroads in Europe. In fairly short order, the company added an overhead scoring display to facilitate cricket on Nomac's existing product *Pub Time Darts.*

Merit's next project *Pub Time Premier* was a video-based scoring game with a CRT in the center and a host of handicapping and other operator-adjustable features that are just now finding widespread acceptance.

Then came a whole new dart platform in the late 1980s, the *Pub Time 2 + 2*, incorporating everything the company had learned with all of the features of previous games wrapped into one. "It was really an effort to standardize all of the dart products we had up to that time," Houriet said.

Merit's *Scorpion* machine sprung from private label work the company was doing for its German distributor Nova. When a new cabinet design was developed, the *Scorpion Stinger* was introduced, and the company followed that with the *Scorpion 9000* that offered a more advanced scoring display, many more games, and an in-depth handicapping system that automatically handicapped players based on their input.

The current dart product, the *Scorpion DX*, is the company's most advanced to date and has been available since earlier this year. It has the same cabinet as the *9000.* However, the unit is designed to be an ATM-style, menu driven system making it easier for players to compete and keep score. There are also a host of communication functions that make it possible to run paperless league systems.

The units can track statistics, scoring, and player standings, all backed up by a Merit exclusive league management system, the League Tracker, which is Windows 95 compatible and can also be used for other tavern sports. "We went through an extensive beta test, and this is really what the operators have been looking for," commented Houriet.

"The players love the system, because it is extremely user friendly," added Feuer. "The software has been designed and perfected to really tune into the way they think. It's very intuitive with a myriad of features that they find very easy to go through with all the information at their fingertips. It has also eliminated the need for score sheets."

In support of its dart product, Merit has also gone the extra mile through the years in promoting leagues with a full-time tournament director and five dart promoters in the field offering up to two weeks of hands-on support for operators just getting started with dart leagues.

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> ***"Before we knew it we had a tiger by its tail. We didn't really plan it that way, but the market acceptance really made it take off. The product was right, the presentation was right, and the cost was right. It was a surprise."***

Merit also sponsors a range of tournament events throughout the year, including its World Series, which is entering its 11th year and has seen individual tournament purses rise from $1,000 to as much as $15,000.

"We like to use the tournament series to continue bolstering markets where we are strong as well as exploring new areas for operators who have been loyal," said tournament director Bob Wiles.

In addition to its nine World Series events this coming season, Merit will co-host six operator-sponsored events across the country. The company is also promoting two operator tournament kits, the Scorpion Challenge which is heading into its second year and the Zap promotional competitions.

The Scorpion Challenge is a series of local events put on by operators who will evaluate players and award certain point levels based on their placement in the tournament and the number of players participating. Eight regional events will then be held for the top 128 players in that region, and the top 50 percent of regional competitors will then be eligible for Merit's Ultimate Game Challenge, a $60,000 mega-event being held in Orlando, Fla., Aug. 6-9, 1998. The top three ZapOff winners will also be eligible for the Ultimate Game Challenge.

"The Scorpion Challenge is handicapped and pro-rated players are not eligible," explained Wiles. "We wanted to target the average player in these events."

To capitalize on the popularity of darts in Europe, Merit will host up to four teams from each nation—including four qualified through the World Series in the United States—in the World Team Championship at the Orlando event.

The past year has seen Merit add a third staple to its line of classic prod-

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ucts, the table hockey game Typhoon. "It began as a cross marketing effort with our German distributor Nova; it's a German built table," explained Rudolph. "The Typhoon's unique in its forward set goal to give you true hockey-style play because the puck can go behind the goal."

Things absolutely exploded

In the mid-1980s, Merit became one of first manufacturers to get involved in the nascent video gaming industry, which was just getting off the ground in states such as Nebraska, Montana, and South Dakota, as well as areas of Canada.

However, the company's days in the video gaming market were numbered after it became apparent that the focus was moving away from the operator and toward larger gaming companies such as IGT, VLC, Bally Gaming, etc.

"After Oregon and Louisiana came on board, we started to recognize some of the problems with respect to video lottery, mainly that it wasn't going in the direction of operator control," Feuer explained. "What started as an evolution of coin-op amusement games got taken over by big gaming concerns. We saw clearly at an early point that it was going to be a difficult market situation."

This prompted Merit to divest itself of its gaming interests and refocus on its core products and strengths: amusement video and darts. "We backed away in 1992 and sold what portions of what remained–some hardware and a vast library of software–to Dynamo and they have continued to evolve products from that base."

Ironically, Merit's foray into the gaming market indirectly led to the next evolution–and one of the most significant–of its product line: the touch screen countertop, which has proved to be incredibly successful for Merit as an individual company and the industry as a whole. The first touch screen countertops were an evolution from the *Pit Boss* family of games.

"That was our first exposure to the technology, and it gave us a good leg up," Feuer said of the company's experience introducing touch screen units in the gaming market as early as 1989. "That catapulted us into the next level. Things absolutely exploded!"

The introduction of the touch screen facilitated game play and allowed the introduction of games that weren't possible with button models. Along with continued success in the dart market, it also helped Merit double in size from the early to mid-1990s and then double again within the last year with the release of the 486-based, CD-ROM touch screen countertop, the *Megatouch XL.*

"With *Megatouch XL* coming out and the explosion of touch screens on the world market (especially in Europe, which was pioneered by our distributors there in conjunction with the support we were giving them) that whole scenario caused us in less than a year to double again," Feuer said. "We are probably four times the size we were as recently as 1993."

A commitment to innovation

The evolution of Merit's touch screen countertop has coincided with the solidification of its long-held company philosophy: to provide operators with low-cost games that can be updated at little or sometimes no cost for continued earnings long after the unit's costs have been covered.

Merit's earlier version of its touch screen countertop, which also come in a cabaret-style cabinet, was called *SuperTouch.* It included more than a dozen games, some from the most recent version of *Pit Boss* and new ones such as Solitaire and Run 21 (called Megatouch at the time). The company has followed with continuous updates and is currently shipping its *Megatouch* 5 or equivalent software update.

"There were new games added which translated into better earning machines and the growth of that product continued as a result," Feuer asserted. "There were also some minor technological changes. We have tried to apply technology in an innovative way to create earnings for operators. The games are still popular today, years after their introduction. I would venture to say you can't find a used *Megatouch* machine on the market. That is the hallmark of Merit's position."

"The philosophy of this company is that once you've bought a *Megatouch* product there's never any need to roll

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it over," added Rudolph. "Even if there is a technology change it has always been supported by the factory. With the proper tools these changes can be installed into the first *Megatouch* game."

In turn, that philosophy has resulted in recognition from operators by way of sales and accolades. Merit's *Megatouch* has won back-to-back awards from AMOA for most innovative new technology even as the company moved forward with an all-new, more advanced version of the *Megatouch* utilizing a 486 processor and CD-ROM drive, the *Megatouch XL*.

According to Houriet, the introduction of the *XL*—with the CD-ROM, 486 processor, and VGA capabilities and monitor, allowed the new system to perform at a much higher level from a graphics, memory storage, and audio standpoint.

"A fair amount of technical learning and research went into learning how to use the CD-ROM effectively," Houriet explained. "We needed to study all the performance and data storage issues and make it run fast enough for coin-op purposes. We were really able to take some of the games that were standards and bring them to the next level by adding a lot more player appeal. All of the photo-based games in the *XL* were not possible in the old system. Now we have a huge library of photos."

New products

Never a company to rest on even its most impressive laurels, Merit introduced its sixth *Megatouch* update, *Megatouch 5*, as well as five new games, great photo content, and an advertising feature for its *Megatouch XL* unit. The new XL features were released as free updates to all XL owners minus a small shipping charge.

Megatouch 5 offers three new games, new Trivia and Phrase Craze content, and the interactive Mega-Link competition option which can connect machines within 100 feet in a location. Operators can now link machines and give players a chance to compete head-to-head, machine-to-machine on games like Double Solitaire, Trivia, and Pile On, as well as the company's popular card games.

New games included on *Megatouch 5* are: Mega-Mind, Pile On, and Quintzee. The connections to link machines come with any new game, chip kit, or board update, and the unit also features a selectable high score clear feature for locations.

The *XL*'s new games are: Photo Hunt, Pix Mix, Power Solitaire, Quick Match, and Strip Club Poker. Special features include a timer for risque material, an auto clear feature which removes high scores every two weeks, and the Six Star Enable program giving locations a pin number to clear high scores, control the machine's volume, and program two of the six video

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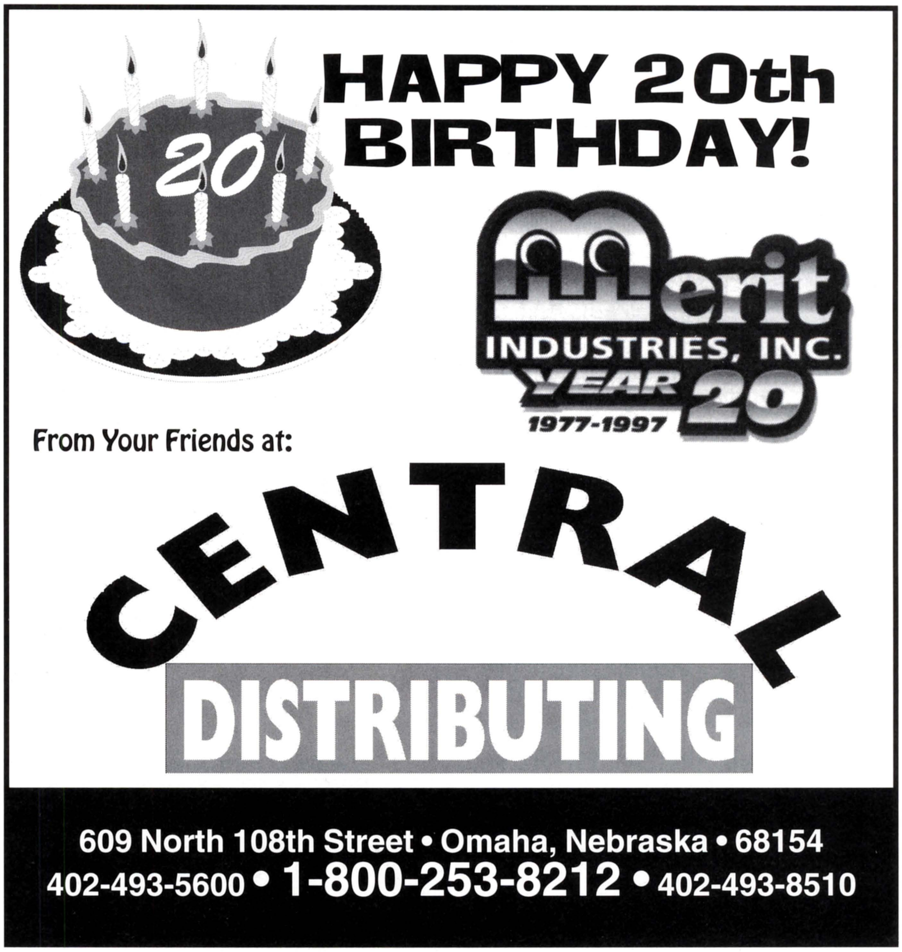

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billboards, which can be used for advertising and include different fonts, backgrounds, and clip art related to tavern and tournament promotions.

Merit plans to introduce linking capabilities for the *Megatouch XL* this month. "With that machine and its higher technology, you can link up to 16 machines in one location, Feuer said. "The packaging, promotions, and presence by setting them up in banks really starts to take hold."

Rudolph said a preview of the *XL* tournament version should also be ready at AMOA, as well as a whole series of new games including "some new styles of games that have never been done on a touch screen before."

Looking to the future

So what does the future hold for a company that has found success in the marketplace based on continued innovation, both from the standpoint of technology and business acumen.

"Our motto, as I said before, is the intelligent application of technology," Feuer answered. "Things today are not at a stage where the exploitation of technology is suitable in a coin-op environment for Internet application. Everybody says Internet, Internet, Internet, but in a coin-op environment, you've got to throw in your quarter and be ready to play.

"We are doing far-ranging things for development of applications for that type of game play, but that's off into the future. The real application today is to have more than one machine in a location and get a lot people involved because of the social aspects. You must create more competition to give the operators more opportunities to run promotions and just up the level of involvement from the players. We have already seen from the first months collections that this linking concept within a location is really hitting pay dirt."

According to Rudolph, Merit will also continue to expand its overseas presence, above and beyond its already burgeoning trade in the European market that is just beginning to tap into the overall potential.

"We are selling products on every continent and in almost every country now including South America and the Asian marketplace," Rudolph said. "Part of the growth in the export market is due to changing laws on the gaming or payout machines. As they are removed, operators are seeing the *Megatouch* machines as a viable alternative."

The continued success of the countertop, Rudolph said, has also created new opportunities domestically, which should translate into further growth for Merit in the coming years.

"Countertops, because they are becoming a very credible piece of equipment, are being looked at by a lot more types of people," he said. "It's like when billiards came out of the dark pool halls. Countertops are going into hotels, pizza places, etc., and with the advent of linking machines together and as people recognize the income potential of the product that will only continue to grow."

So the final question for Merit, a company with a commitment to operators that has been matched by their loyal business—what does the future hold for street operators, whom some industry pundits have already closed the book on?

"The overall climate for the street operator is probably the best it has been for some time," Rudolph concluded. "We see that operators who are really being smart—managing their leagues and operating products with long-term potential—are really doing very well now and will continue to do so." ▲

FROM TOP: The Bensalem, Pa.,-based company boasts 500 employees and 90,000 square feet of office and manufacturing space; Merit has five full-time dart promoters in the field offering up to two weeks of hands-on support for operators just getting started with leagues.

merit industries

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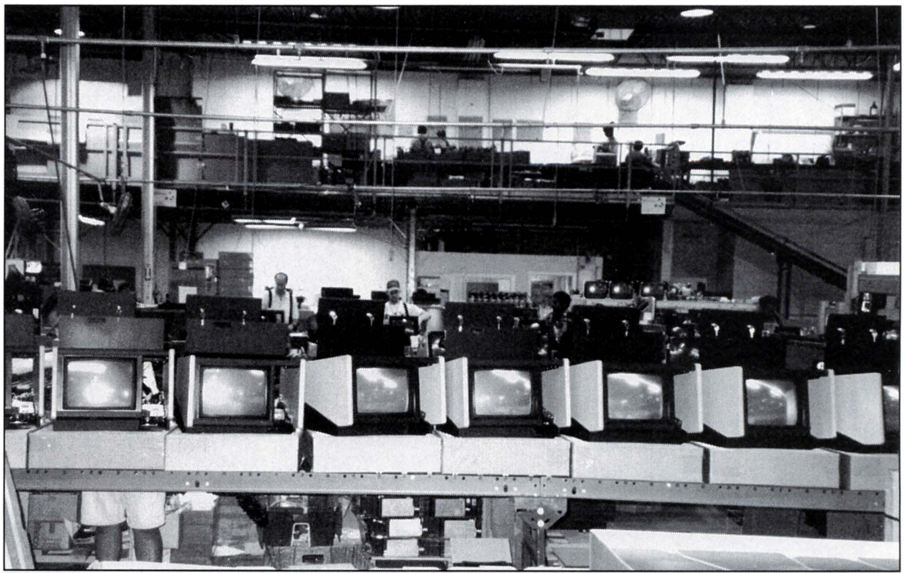


Megatouch units on the assembly line.

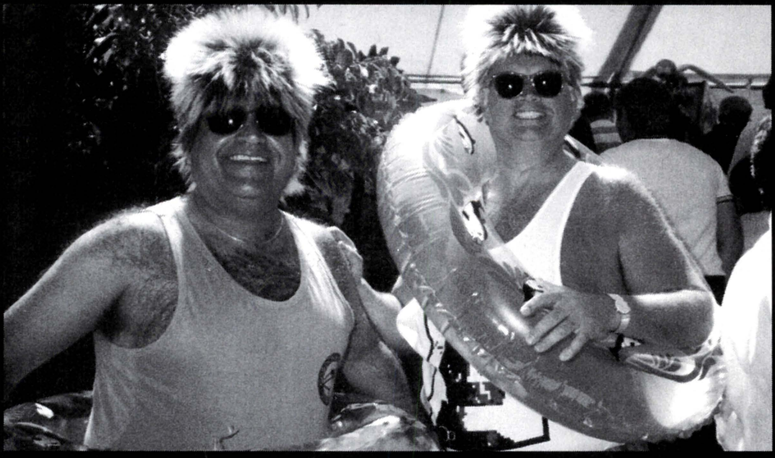
Hope you enjoy these photos from the industry's past.

MANIA CHALLENGE
MANIA CHALLENGE
MANIA CHALLENGE

Namco's Frank Cosentino at a trade show some years ago. If you remember when *Mania Challenge* or *Paper Boy* were introduced, you'll know just how many years ago.

Here's Betson's Dave Myers (l) with Ron Getlan of Amusement Consultants and uncle of Michael Getlan, a well-known speaker at many trade shows.

The new AAMA president, Mike Rudowicz (c) of Konami, with former Bally colleagues, Chuck Farmer (l) and Maury Ferchen. I wonder what those guys are doing now.



I'm still chuckling at this one. Shane Breaks and Satish Bhutani were the "models" for the game *Toobin'*.

A
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C
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FUN-E-BALL

BONNIE THEARD

Big SMILES big PROFITS

SMALL SPACES

Tough question: What machines are equally suitable for an arcade, toy store, car wash, and restaurant? Simple answer: Interactive games that combine game play and a reward for the best of both worlds and good ROI.

"The best little secret in the industry," is how Mel LaForce, vice president of Fun Industries in East Moline, Ill., describes interactive games that provide entertainment value as well as a small prize.

Ed Dencer, operations manager for Shaffer Services in Columbus, Ohio, says, "One of the positives is the reward for every play. That makes for a satisfied customer. It's the same as redemption where you get a reward for every token or coin with a ticket. That's the key to keeping young people playing the games. At least they get something and they feel like a winner."

UNTAPPED MARKET

The age group of four or five to 11 or 12 years old is a virtually untapped market. In that span of years children are outgrowing kiddie rides but are not physically able to reach or master the controls on standard pinballs or videos.

Fun Industries has been turning out kid-appealing titles for decades, games such as *Kick 'N Catch, Copy Cat, Pop Fly,* and the new *Fun-E-Ball* which debuts at AMOA '97 this month. Says LaForce: "Every operator in the country should have three or four of these steady earning games."

> ***"If you are in the coin-op business you should be looking at anything that takes a coin. It's a matter of opening up your horizons."***

A description on the *Copy Cat* brochure sums up the customer base for these game/vendors: "Fun for all ages, but most important, it fills two very critical voids now in the industry: 1) the age group between five and 12 years old, and 2) girls. You may laugh, but who has the best chance of getting in mom and dad's pocket for quarters? What do you offer for this group?"

In the case of *Fun-E-Ball,* the vended prize becomes part of the playfield, its path controlled by the player who uses a steering wheel. "This is not a passive game," says LaForce. "We want our young players to work for the prize, which is actually a tremendous amount of fun. It has everything; kids are going to love it."

Shaffer Services' Dencer operates 14 *Kick 'N Catch* units and one *Pop Fly* in theater arcades and pizza restaurants. "We were looking for product that gave a value for play," explains Dencer. "The niche with these two games is you can win one ball no matter what, but you can win a second one by reaching a certain skill level. It's a win-win proposition for the person playing the game.

"I've seen a seven- or eight-year-old get a two-ball win and give one of the prizes to a younger sibling. Everyone wins again—it helps to keep everybody happy. And that's part of the appeal of the games."

Dencer adds, "One of the other things we look at is interpretation. If you give something back to the player it takes it out of the realm of chance and gives it more of a skill level."

Over at Mayoni Enterprises, which has been producing its *Big Top Mini Pinball* for seven years, sales manager Julie Hart says the game/vendor was expressly designed for younger kids. "We redesigned the game about a year and a half ago to make it even more attractive to children. They get the prize and they get to play the game. They literally cannot lose the ball. This machine does very well."

Hart suggests placing *Big Top Mini Pinball* "anywhere there are traditional pinball games" because operators find that in a lot of places chairs are moved over so children can play the big games.

Troy Tidwell of Paris, Tenn., recently placed a *Big Top Mini Pinball* in a small pizza restaurant in Murray, Ky. "I've had very good success," says Tidwell. "The game is in a kiddie playroom with balls, riding toys, and a few other games. Kids get the benefit of both a prize and a game and they enjoy it."

Tidwell has 40 locations in rural west Tennessee and west Kentucky, mostly with flat vending (sticker) machines, candy and gum machines, and pay telephones. "If I had more appropriate locations I would buy more *Big Top Mini Pinball* games in a minute."

Dan Wollmann of West Coast Mfg. has just introduced his *Lollipop Exchange* that should have wide appeal with youngsters. He describes the machine as "a mechanical crane scoop-type bulk lollipop vending machine." He adds, "The incredible thing about this machine is that it is a fully interactive unit."

Interactive is the key word. Jim Chapman, president of JP Distributing in Aurora, Colo., says his *Batter Up* and *Slam Dunk* machines "are entertaining and unique. In my own locations the customers love to see something new and different. They have become bored with other bulk vending that does not really entertain the player.

"Both games have been in development and on our routes for over two years. The key to their success is twofold: players must do something before they get the prize, and the units are small in size and do not require electricity. These two features are very attractive to the operator."

Chapman sees a "real need for these types of products. There are not many products that can bring in the type of ROI seen with these machines at the prices we are selling them."

MISSED REVENUE

Mike McWilliams of Specialty Coin Marketing that handles sales for P & E Technologies' vendgames *Catch-N-Win* and *Whack 'N Win* says, "A lot of operators overlook this type of machine and go with the standard stuff. They should definitely be in this market."

According to P & E president Phil Cornick, "The bulk vending people think it's amusement, the amusement people think it's bulk vending, and they are both missing out. It's suitable for both markets. The games pay well, earn well, and play reliably. We're frustrated that folks in the industry have not picked up on it."

McWilliams interjects, "The location life of these games is incredible; they tend to stay for long periods of time and the only thing that needs to be changed is the prizes. Games are easy to understand, and mechanically they are simple and extremely reliable. The prize dispensing mechanism has been tested thoroughly. Children are attracted to these small games because

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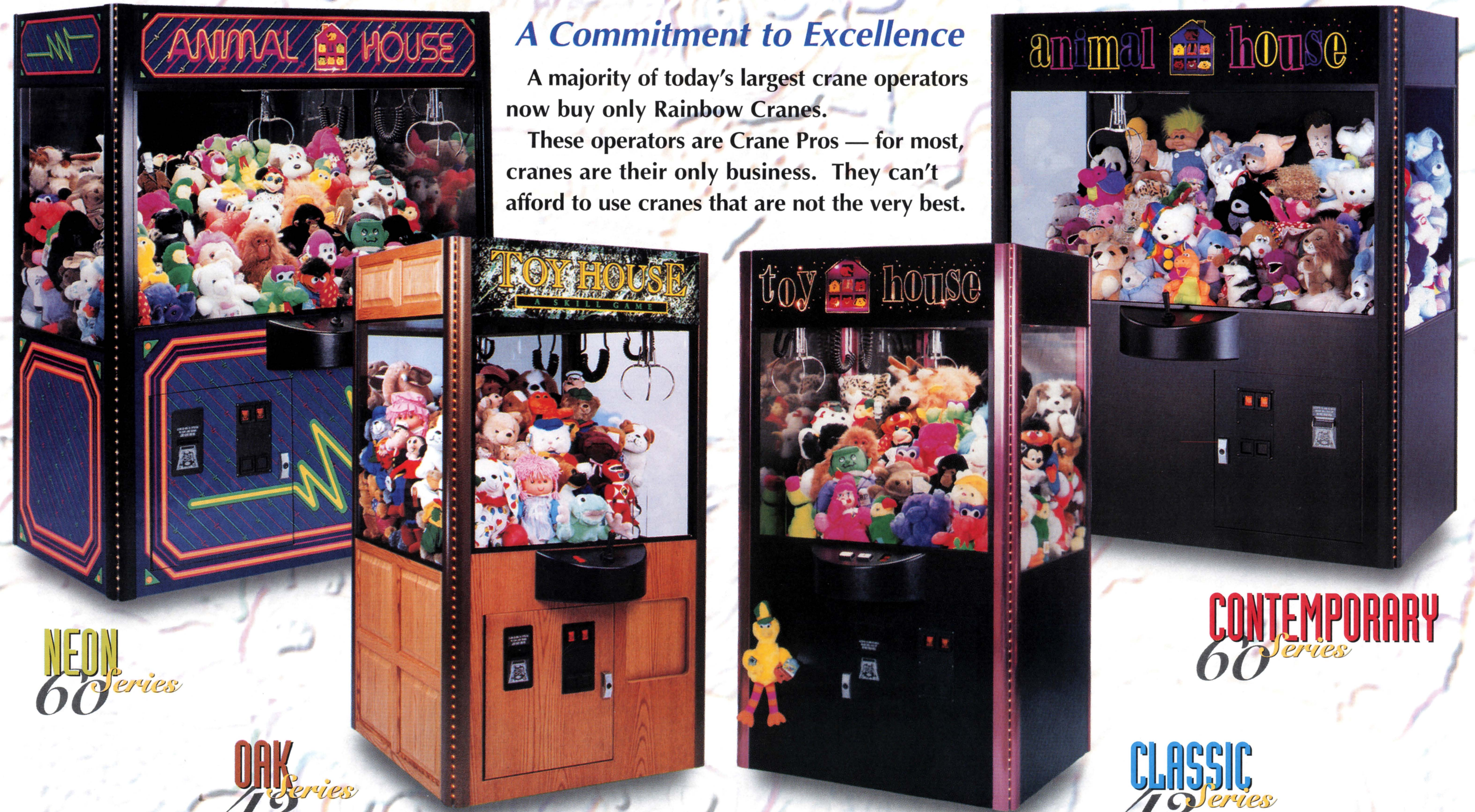
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LOCATIONS

These interactive vending games are non-violent in theme and can go almost anywhere: laundromat, movie theater lobby, ice cream parlor, video rental store, skating rink, truck stop, and family restaurant (especially one serving pizza).

At Strategic Innovation in Idaho Falls, Idaho, director of sales Alan Jenkins is busy with the company's *Moon Blaster* game that features a gumball traveling a moon crater playfield. "We're having a lot of fun with this machine," says Jenkins. "The only complaint is that the carpet is worn out in front of the machine! Because of the interactive nature of the game, adults are playing it."

Moon Blaster can go anywhere, notes Jenkins–fun parks, fast food outlets, grocery stores, water parks, bowling centers–because of its size and the fact that it does not require electricity.

"This is not something they watch," he says, "it's something they interact with. The success of *Moon Blaster* has led Jenkins and company president Rick Rowberry to return to the drawing board with some new designs in mind.

Marva and Frank Zwahlen of Utah have five *Moon Blaster* units in such different locations as gas stations (two machines), a grocery store, a video store, and a Taco Time restaurant. "We're very happy with the games' performance," says Marva Zwahlen, who adds that the locations like the machines because they require no special upkeep.

Phil Orcutt of VenMax in Richmond, Va., has a variety of bulk vending units in 47 locations, from pet stores to souvenir shops and hardware stores to cafeterias. "There are definitely opportunities with bulk vending," says Orcutt.

Orcutt started with 30 mint patty machines, then added bubble gum machines, spirals, and kinetic-style machines. Smaller machines got Orcutt into the business and taught him how to place them, when to go in, and when not to go in.

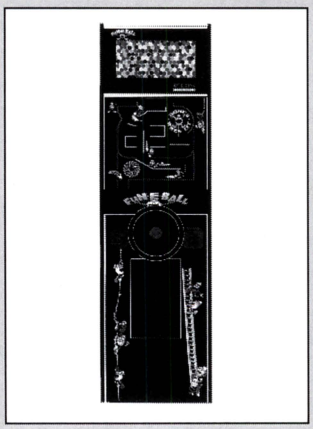
"Now I try for the bigger machines," he says. "I look for machines that give entertainment value. They cost more, are harder to place, but are more rewarding. If you don't keep abreast of the market and update your machines you could lose your location to the guy who comes in with the newer machines."

Mike Kinoshita of G & N Designs in Sunnyvale, Calif., is an architect by profession but a bulk vending operator by choice, as a sideline. "I've always been open to other ways of generating income," says Kinoshita, who, along

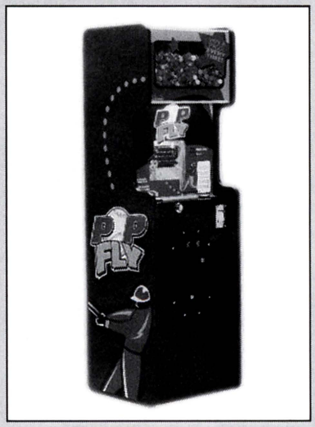
EQUIPMENT GUIDE

COPY CAT
COPY CAT

Copy Cat
Skill and prize vendor in one. Players must hit four buttons in the same order as they light up, gaining 25 points for every correct hit. Prizes can be vended at any point level by setting the digital controls. Features: sound effects, flashing lights, winner options, and redemption option. Dimensions: 21" wide x 20" deep x 67" high.
Fun Industries
(800)747-1144
(309)755-5021



Fun-E-Ball
Players use a wheel to manipulate a prize through a maze in a visually strong game reminiscent of Steer Crazy. The maze has moving parts such as shelves, elevators, and rotating holes. Features: whimsical cartoon characters on the playfield and cabinet, neon colors, bonus hole, sound effects, and ticket option. Dimensions: 24" deep x 72" high.
Fun Industries
(800)747-1144
(309)755-5021



Pop Fly
Baseball-themed machine that vends super balls, candy, gum, or capsules. Players twist the knob to catch the ball after it falls through the pins. Points are scored for each catch. Features: digital scoring, large vend capacity, optional prize vend settings, and winner play options. Dimensions: 21" wide x 20" deep x 68" high.
Fun Industries
(800)747-1144
(309)755-5021

Batter Up
Baseball-themed unit awards gumballs, bouncy balls, secret centers, and jawbreakers. Insert a coin, a prize falls into the shooter, then take aim to get the prize in a hole for a single, double, triple, or home run. Golf, soccer, and hockey are next. Features: solid-metal stand, 14" Lexan globe, Beaver mech. Dimensions: 16" wide x 24" deep x 42" high.
JP Distributing
(888)281-7710

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.85¢ (5"-11")	61.20	122.40
.90¢ (5"-12")	64.80	129.60
1.00 (6"-12")	72.00	144.00
1.15 (6"-13")	82.80	165.60
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with a partner, has 20 machines in restaurants and memorabilia and baseball card shops in malls.

Kinoshita has a variety of machines from the kinetic-style to the interactive *Slam Dunk* and *Batter Up* games, all from JP Distributing. "These machines caught my attention," he explains. "I look for a lot of foot traffic, with kids in the mix. I find places on my own by talking to the manager or store owner. You get a lot of 'No' answers, but the few 'Yes' answers are well worth it. These machines help the stores as far as giving customers a little bit more."

Kinoshita tries to locate his machines at the entrance of a store or in the waiting area: "You want it near the entry and possibly visible from the mall so people walking by can see it. Sometimes mall management has some restrictions, or a store is corporately owned or is a franchise, and it's hard to get into. The mom and pop-type store or one with a single proprietor works out well."

ADDED FUN

Operators can do promotions with the location, suggests Fun Industries' LaForce. For example, a numbered rubber ball that's vended can mean a free soft drink, skating rental, or game of bowling. Also, it's easy to change the type of product vended and offer variety to the players and the locations without moving the game. For an even fresher look switch out games with the same small footprint.

"The nicest part about our games is a kid gets something," says LaForce. "Rarely do children go up to the game alone; they go in a group. The magic here is that when they put their money in and the first kid gets that prize, then all the kids want to play the game. It's a double-whammy. Because there's a product involved, there's a trend to experiment with 50-cent vend."

What does LaForce say to those who are skeptical about moving into new territory with these types of machines? "If you are in the coin-op business you should be looking at anything that takes a coin. It's a matter of opening up your horizons."

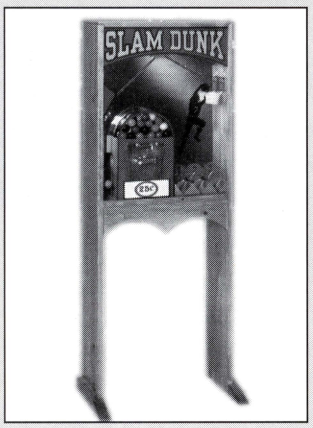
COST AND ROI

Now we get down to the nitty-gritty: How much do these machines cost and how much can they bring in?

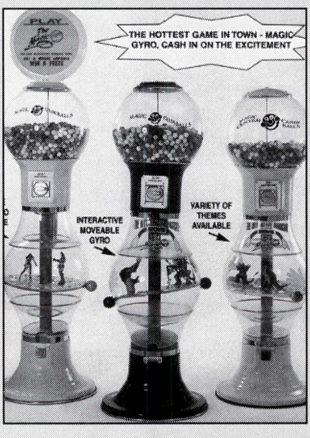
Cost per machine ranges from $245 to $595 for the smaller units up to about $2,000 or $2,500 for larger, more complex machines in bigger cabinets. Manufacturers say expected revenue, depending on traffic, can run from $20 per week per machine up to $80 per week. The highest amount claimed was $117 per week.

The location split is a lot different than traditional coin-op games. The

EQUIPMENT GUIDE



Slam Dunk
Simple and fun basketball-themed game/vendor where gumballs, jawbreakers, bouncy balls, or secret centers fall into a shooter on the left side, then players shoot the prize into the hoop on the right side and win it. A football version is planned. For competition, prize slots are marked one point, two points, and three points.
JP Distributing
(888)281-7710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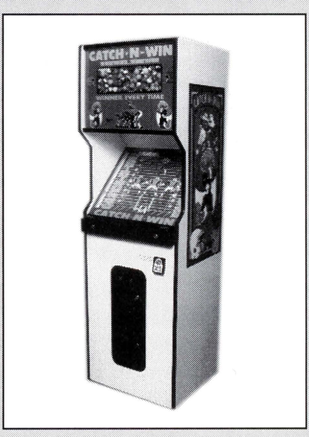
Magic Gyro
Players insert a coin, then use knobs on the movable gyro below the globe to get the dispensed item into the hole and delivered to the player. Choose from four themes: dinosaurs, space, robots, and jungle. Features: dual process reinforced Fiberglas, Lexan cylinder and globe, and Beaver Mech. Options: pump top, custom art, and music.
Magic Gumball International
(800)576-2020

Big Top Mini Pinball
Circus-themed machine that awards a prize with every play. Players insert a coin, turn the knob to release the prize and put the ball into play. Vends gumballs, rubber balls, eggs, and V-1 and V-2 capsules. Features: all-steel cabinet and brackets, powder-coat finish, and silk screen decorations. Dimensions: 18" wide x 25" deep x 48" high.
Mayoni Enterprises
(800)345-1183



Catch-N-Win
Players use buttons to move a cloud back and forth while trying to catch plastic balls falling through a maze of pins and win a gumball. Features: easy loading and low maintenance, bright graphics, large prize storage area, and range of operator-selectable options. Dimensions: 21" wide x 19" deep x 66" high.
P & E Technologies
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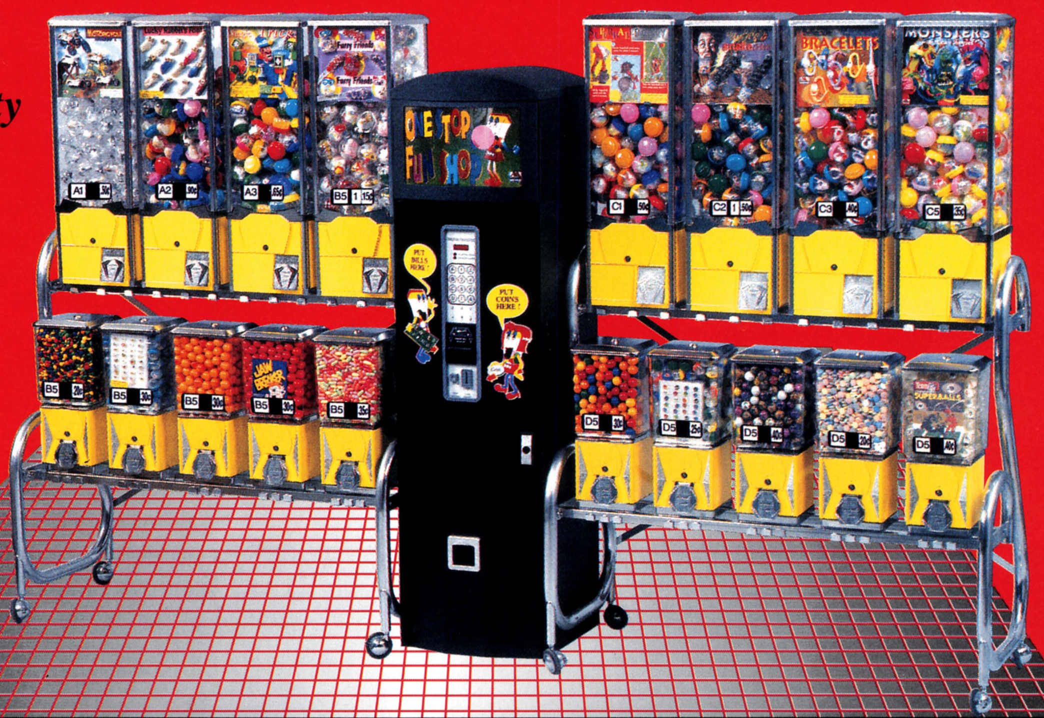

SECURITY

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- 13 gauge steel
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- Chicago Ace Lock with 30,000 combinations standard and can be upgraded with a 5,000,000 combination tubar lock
- Double door wall protector to prevent anyone from prying open the door
- Optional cash box & dollar bill lock available
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- Adapts to all bulk vendors
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- Can be programmed to any price from zero (free) up to $99.95 in .05¢ increments
- One control unit connects up to 32 machines
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- All parts are easily accessible
- Can be adapted to accept most foreign currencies

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lowest reported was 15 percent to the location, while the average appears to be 25 to 30 percent to the location. That means 70 to 75 percent to the operator, who must also factor in the cost of the vended product which is usually ordered through wholesalers and distributors.

Specialty Coin Marketing's McWilliams points out, "These machines bring in incidental income; they will not rob from existing games, although they could take from bulk vending-only machines."

He also cautions: "Operators don't always look at games for ROI and only look at what they do per week. These interactive games that also vend a prize are viable because they sustain week after week. Longevity is important. I like to compare these games to electronic dart games. Maybe the darts bring in $40 per week on a national average, and the operator has to go through tremendous effort to promote the games with leagues, yet he seems to accept it. You can get $40 a week with these interactive vending games without the promotions."

"Children are attracted to these small games because they know they were built for them."

CONCLUSION

There are a lot of spaces in small businesses that could accommodate an interactive bulk vending unit that entertains children as well as awards them a small prize.

If you have the desire to branch out, the low risk of the initial investment in these machines could be the turning point. Start looking around businesses you normally frequent, from your neighborhood hardware store to the car wash.

Notice the small children in tow at these places and imagine their pleasure in finding a prize vending game at their eye level. Parents will view it as a diversion for the kids or a reward for their good behavior. If you are a regular customer and sometimes chat with the manager, you can easily approach him with the idea.

Also, consider your existing locations. You don't have to own or operate an FEC to have in-between age children in your locations. Do a little monitoring and take a head count by age and gender.

Fun Industries' LaForce reminds: "You are dealing with a niche market. There will always be young children. The key is that these games are forever." ▲

EQUIPMENT GUIDE

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Dinosaur-themed game where buttons light up in game stages and players are challenged to hit the lights to gain points and win prizes. Features: compact cabinet design that conserves floor space, flexible prize-dispensing system that vends different prizes, and redemption mode with optional ticket dispenser.
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Moon Blaster
Interactive gumball game where players can pay for one and play for two gumballs (also jawbreakers and rubber balls). Players use a paddle to hit the prize around a space-themed playfield. If they hit the moon a second prize is released. Features: all-steel construction, Lexan, no electricity needed. Dimensions: 18" wide x 31" deep x 51" high.
Strategic Innovation
(888)757-2738

Lollipop Exchange
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"The location life of these games is incredible; they tend to stay for long periods of time."

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Meter	Old Meter	New Meter	Test
1	40483	46347	0
2	38180	29320	0
3	26900	19700	0

Meter Total $481.00 Actual Count $481.00
Free Credits $0.00 Refunds $0.00
Meter Side $481.00 – Money Side $481.00 = Over/Short $0.00
Due Op. $240.50 Due Loc. $240.50 Tax $0.00
Coll. Total $1,646.50

Changer Info
Changers ($) $0.00
Quarters ($) $0.00
Promo ($) $0.00
Avg. Token Value $0.00

	Operator	Location
Split Total	$823.25	$823.25
Other Refunds	$0.00	
License Pmt.'s	$0.00	
Loan Pmt.'s		
Misc. Pmt.'s	$600.00	
Money Coll./Left	$76.75	
Operator Income	$1,500.00	
Total Tax	$0.00	
After Tax	$1,500.00	$146.50

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MANUFACTURER
MEETING

A Sega distributor appreciation getaway

combines serious business and serious fun!

"I said that we weren't going to sit on our ass and let the market shrink. I said we were going to put our money where our mouth is," declared Sega GameWorks' Skip Paul at the company's distributor appreciation getaway in San Diego, Calif., the first week of September, which was to give meaning to his words.

The focus of the meeting was, of course, to introduce the latest games, *Jurassic Park: The Lost World* and *Motor Raid,* but there was much more to be said and heard. President Al Stone began by telling the streamlined distributor network, "As I stand among my good, old friends, I want to say that our company has changed in the past 18 months." He added that the distributor network and Sega GameWorks is becoming a family and he encouraged everyone to be open and frank with each other. "We care about your business and we hope that you care about ours."

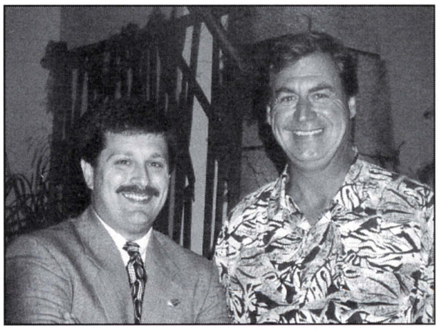
Ken Anderson, vice president of sales and marketing, talked of challenges and opportunities, noting that some segments of the industry have shrunk to the point of being alarming. "But together we can rebuild and readdress the industry," he contended.

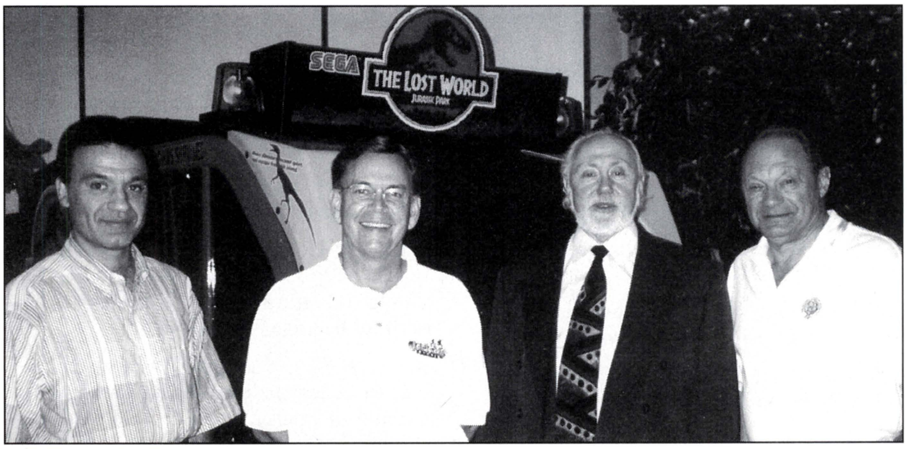
Taking a complicated time in our industry when it seems players are finding others means of entertainment, Ken simply said, "We have the people, all we have to do is interest them!" He talked of opportunites that await the industry, saying, "If we continue doing business exactly like we have been, the industry will die."

This led to an optimistic discussion of opening new markets and focusing on ones that need extra attention. He is adamant that operators can be their own worst enemies at times, "In some states I've visited, I was ashamed to be in the coin machine business," he alleged as he pointed out dirty games and antiquated equipment. Ken encouraged distributors to work with

From left: Betson's John Lotz and Peter Betti, Greater Southern's Morris Piha (in an authentic New Orleans Tabasco shirt), and Sega's Takeshi Uehara and Howell Ivy.

Sega's John Hill (r) welcomes Canadian distributor Paul Janda.


Sega's Tony Maniscalco (l) is all smiles over something Shaffer's Bill Kraft said. (Hope it was a big order!)



From left: Atlas' Ed Pellegrini, Sega's Skip Paul and Ken Anderson, and Atlas' Jerry Marcus.

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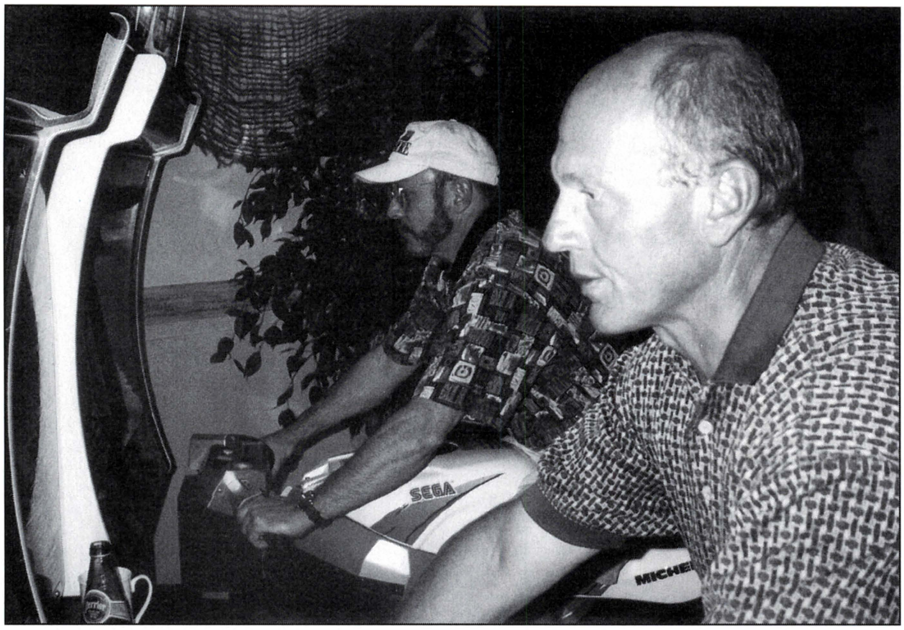
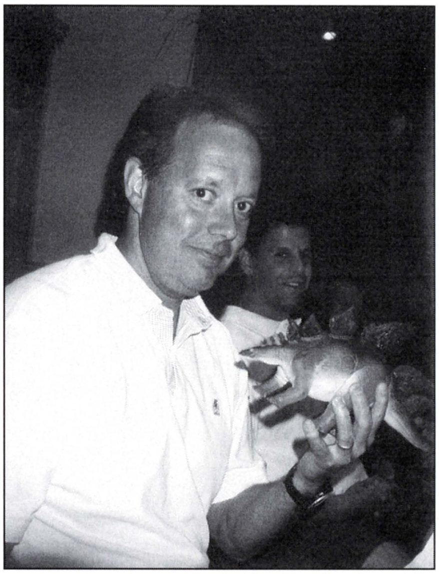
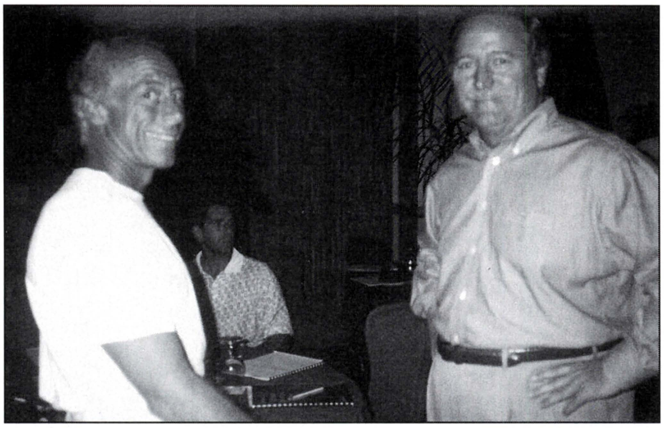


State Sales' Steve Koenigsberg (l) and Betson's Peter Betti playing the new intense driving/fighting game *Motor Raid*.



"I think I found someone I can beat on the golf course!" says Birmingham Vending's Gary Gouse with a Jurassic Park dinosaur. Steve Taranto doesn't seem too sure as he looks on.



C.A. Robinson's Ira Bettelman (l) with Sega GameWorks' president Al Stone.

From left: Darl Davidson, director of service, and Dave Cantrelle, technical service manager, are showing us what they mean when they say once you play *Jurassic Park: The Lost World* you'll be hooked (or is that eaten?).

---

their operators in updating and even finding new markets. "FECs are attracting a larger player base," he noted.

He continued, "The retail market is wide open and we challenge you to make it work." He added that Sega GameWorks has been in negotiations with Wal-Mart, which plans on opening some 200 new stores this year. These talks with the retail giant are part of an ongoing program by Sega GameWorks to redefine and find new markets. "We have to create new markets, that's a fact, but it's really all about promotion. In the movie industry, they don't put out a movie and hope someone will come. The movie industry relies on promotion, promotion, promotion. We should be taking a lesson from them.," Ken said. "Sega is here to help.We challenge you to make it work."

His final words were "This is a great and wonderful time in our industry. We all have to dig in a protect our territory, and our territory is the coin machine industry. But the market window is moving so we should act now."

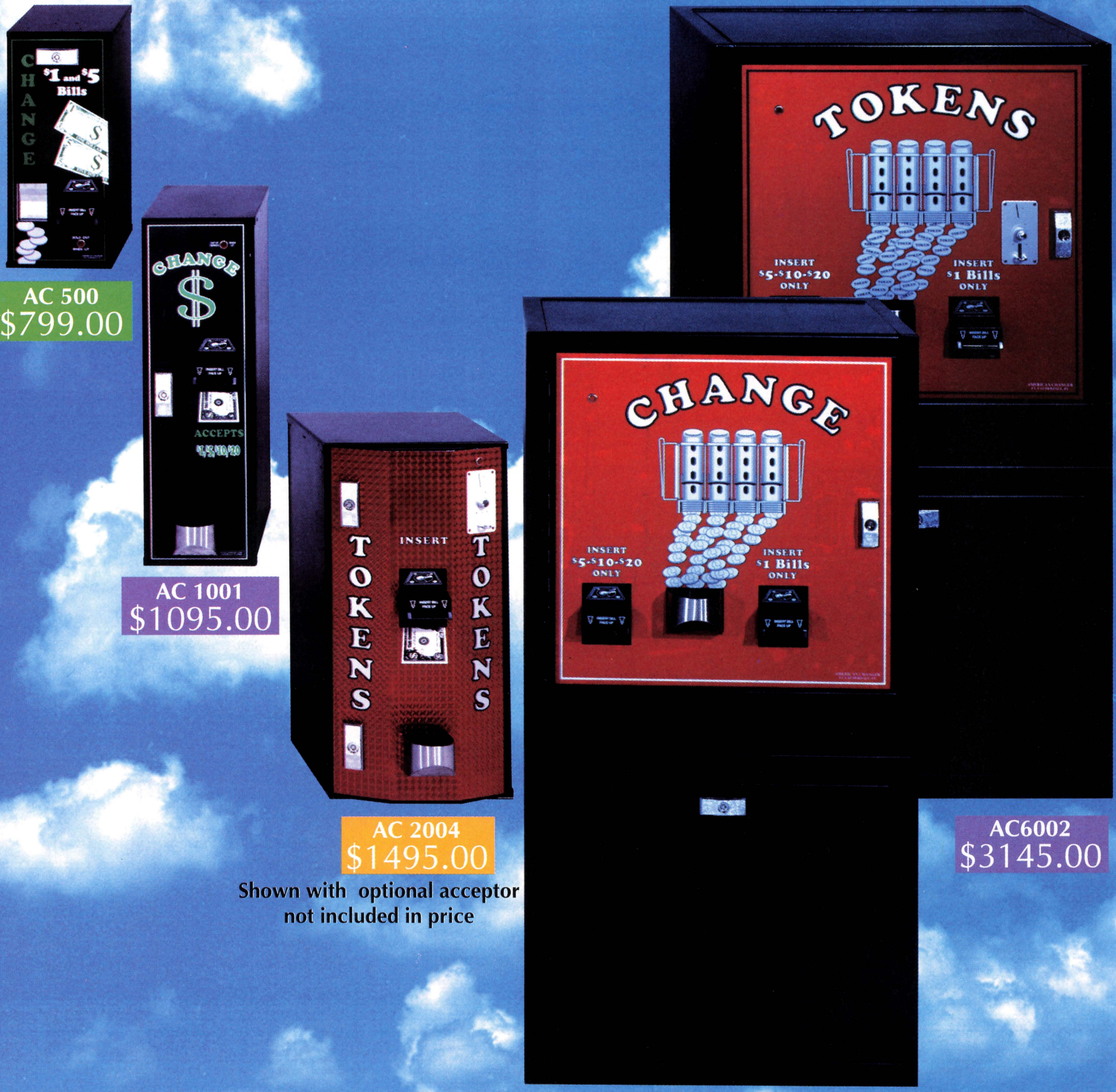
SALES AND MARKETING SUPPORT

John Hill, eastern regional sales manager, spoke of the partnership between Sega GameWorks and distributors. "Everyone wants a partnership, but one that works."

He then went on to outline key points Sega GameWorks is doing to assure distributors that they are a valuable partner. For instance, the Sega sales team visits operators with the distributor sales people. "We get information and get to talk with operators one-on-one, something that is necessary," Hill said.

By visiting operators in their own territory, Hill said that the Sega sales people are able to pass along promo-

We're changing the industry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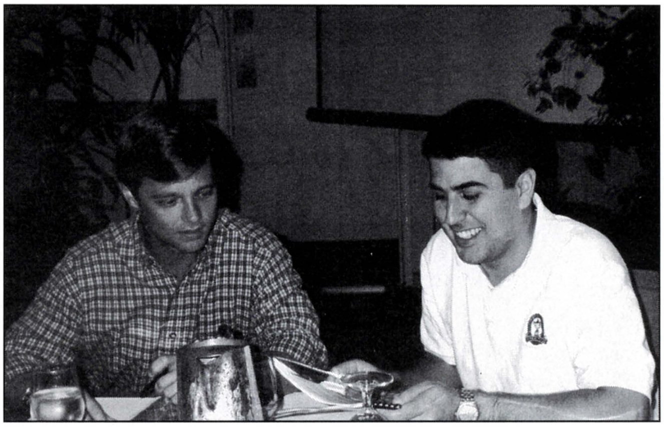
From left: Distributors Matt Davison, Ann Winfield, and Tom Grieve.



These two guys mean business! Jon W. Brady (l) compares notes with Mondial's Bruce Sarkisian.

tional ideas that are working, ones that are successful. "If we see something that is successful, we can share that information with others," he explained.

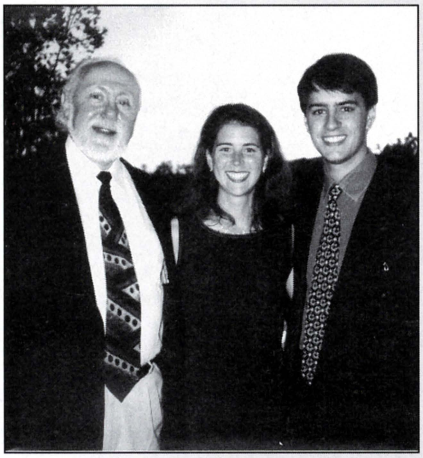
Here are some others: educating distributors' sales people on the product; to be there as a last resort for parts and service when there is a problem; providing up-to-date product information; facilitating special needs; and respecting and adhering to confidentiality.

Other Sega GameWorks team members addressed the group. Pete Gustafson, western regional sales manager, said, "People don't stop playing because they get old, they get old because they stop playing!" He went on to emphasize that we are in the entertainment business and if the industry isn't providing fun entertainment, we aren't doing our job.

Midwest regional sales manager Tony Maniscalco said that *Motor Raid* is "the most realistic driving game the industry's seen in a long time. Who wouldn't love the combined realism of racing with the fantasy of fighting!"

Todd Wilson, controller/director of finance, talked of leasing programs, noting that past ones were only mildly successful. However, he said it's a long-term commitment from Sega and the goal is more cash flow for operators. "Leasing changed the automobile industry," he confirmed. "Leasing could have a major impact on our industry as well. Leasing games can make as much sense as leasing a car."

Skip Paul had a bulging list of things to talk about, first thanking the distributors for going the extra mile and for their support. His focus, of course, was on the opening of the company's GameWorks locations, observing that over three million people have passed through the three locations. "We are now finished with our prototypes and we're now in production," he said of the company's plans to open more of these mega facilities that are brimming with the latest in...well, everything from games and Internet access to



SAN DIEGO HONEYMOON!

Talk about combining business with pleasure! Dominic Laniel (r) of Laniel Automatic in Canada and his wife Stefanie were married Aug. 30 but couldn't let business get in the way of the honeymoon. They did both during the Sega GameWorks outing. Ken Anderson is offering his heartfelt congratulations!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DAD!

Joe Hinderer had more than his birthday to celebrate. His wife Amy recently found out they are expecting their first baby. They celebrated both during the meeting.

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food and drink.

He confronted head-on concerns that operators have expressed about GameWorks opening in their areas. “Our goal is to grow business, not cannibalize our customers,” he asserted. He stressed that some conflicts between operators and GameWorks were not intentional, but miscommunication. “If you hear rumblings of something going on or being said, please give me a call so we can deal with it right then and there.”

He added, “What is the impact of a GameWorks in a community? Look at the facts. Our goal is to raise the profile of video games and have a positive impact on the industry itself.”

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TELEVISION AND RADIO

A GameWorks opening creates a media frenzy. Movie stars are on hand for the grand opening and you can be sure the media is not far behind. Skip Paul showed video tapes of some of this coverage, including an MTV spot that was remarkable. GameWorks has created spots for radio that are clever and irresistible. The theme is pleasure overload at its locations and the tag line “everything good all at once” is echoed in a variety of stories that begin with someone having a really bad time that ends with the best they’d ever hoped for. Then that scenario is compared to spending time in a GameWorks location.

He heaped praise on Mr. Nakayama of the parent company in Japan for his flexibility, enabling Sega GameWorks to maintain its momentum. He also noted that Sega will be introducing a new line of products that will benefit the industry.

JURASSIC PARK: THE LOST WORLD

“Every so often, a special game comes along that raises the bar for all that follow,” states Sega about its new video game, *Jurassic Park: The Lost World*. You feel, hear, see, and submerge yourself into the action of the hit movie, “The Lost World: Jurassic Park.”

This in-your-face 3-D gun shooting game offers a million polygons per second, full texture-mapping, and 60 frames per second. Its awesome graphics are displayed on a 50-inch monitor with a four-speaker surround sound system that makes you think the 14 dinosaurs are eyeing you up for lunch!

The player’s mission is to get Ian and Sarah safely off the island, even though as kids will do, they were busy with more important things, like looking after an injured baby T-Rex. The trek to safety involves confrontations with a frightening variety of bloodthirsty dinosaurs (a mama T-Rex looking for junior?) in five precarious stages, each one more thrilling than the last.

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MOTOR RAID

No one would argue that driving- and fighting-themed games dominate the list of the most popular video games. OK, how about a driving AND fighting game rolled into one? Sounds like the recipe for pleasing just about everyone. *Motor Raid* is a futuristic motorcycle race that screams the fact that the rules of motorcycle racing have changed. "May the best man win" is just too tame for this action packed thriller. "Win at all costs" may be more appropriate.

There are four drivers, each with his own motorcycle, weapons, and fighting style. Players can kick opponents off their bikes, whack them over the head with a lance, hurl their weapon, or inflict other injury all in an effort to cause the opponent to lose ground. If none of that works, the player can ignite the turbo booster to blast past the opponents or evade potential assaults.

The game comes in the attractive *Manx TT* twin deluxe cabinet configuration with high resolution 29-inch monitors and a six-speaker system that will give you a memorable rumbling adventure you'll feel as well as see. ▲

SEGA PINBALL SHOWS *X-FILES*

Sega Pinball took advantage of having distributors in town for the Sega GameWorks meeting to show them the latest in pinball fun.

Highlighted with scenes from some of the most famous episodes, The *X-Files* beckons players to a game designed for the average players. Now why would that be important we asked Sega Pinball's Jolly Backer and Gary Stern? "The game appeals to the average players so they aren't frustrated when they can't access some of the features like multiball for instance. It is so easy to get multiball. It's a game that introduces the average player to pinball fun."

From left: Gary Stern, Takeshi Uehara, and Jolly Backer by *The X-Files.*

While touting the appeal to average players, even the most die-hard pinball enthusiast will gravitate toward the machine's tempting graphics and the alien baby encased in Erlenmeyer's flask, the file cabinet that gets you multiball, and the artwork on the showcase backbox cabinet.

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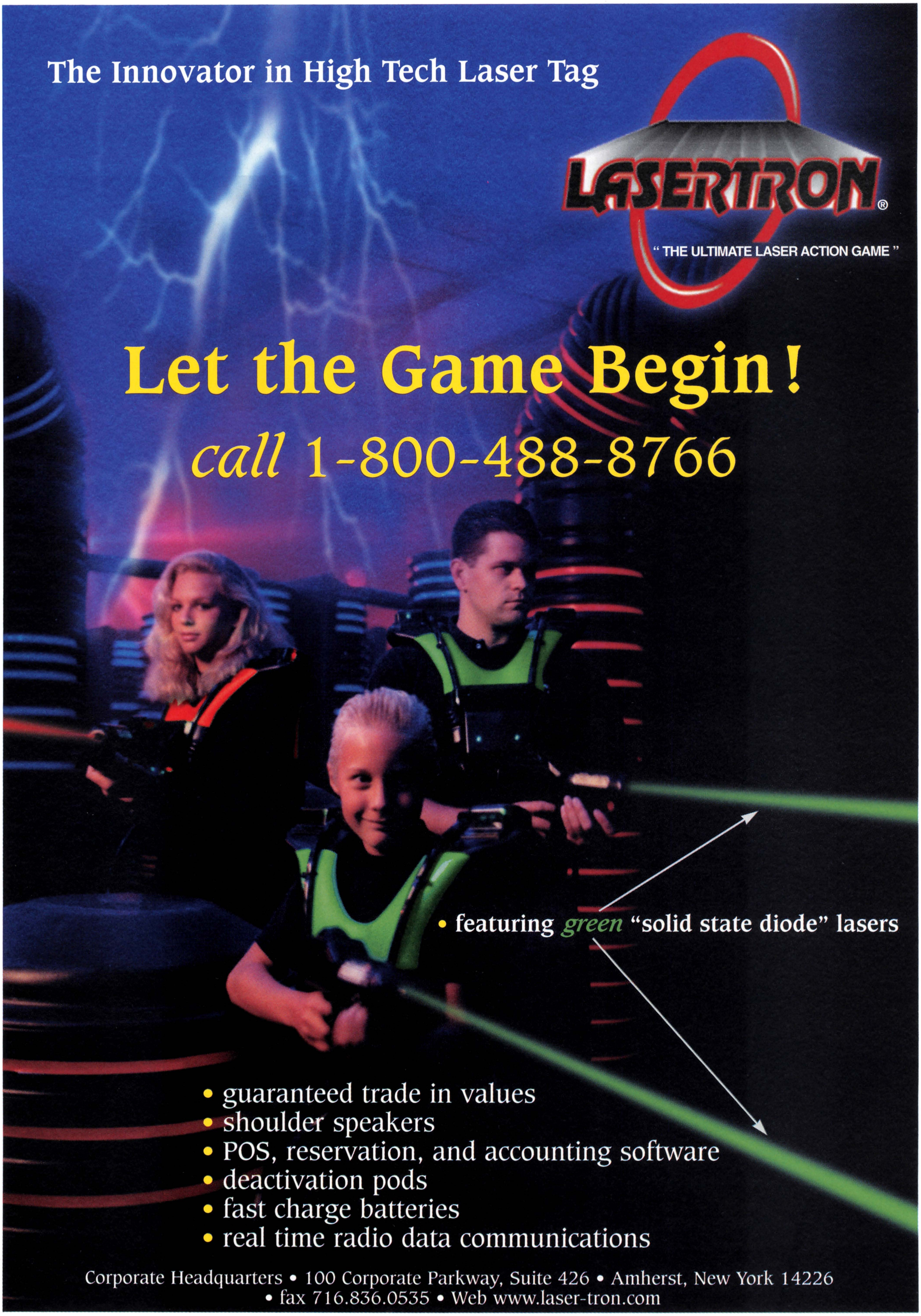

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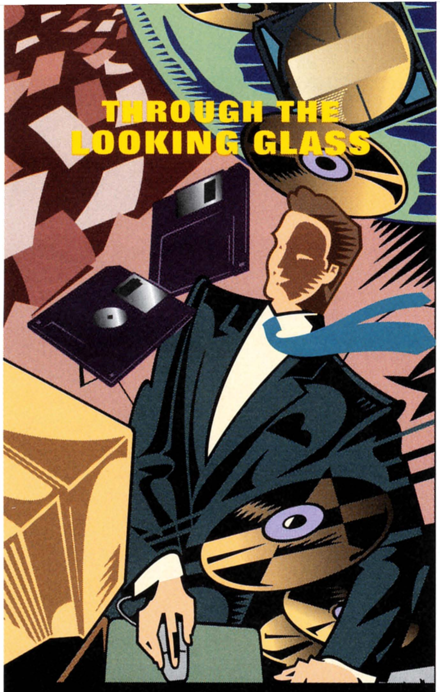


STEVE WHITE

Open arcade event RAISES BOTH QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

The first meeting of the Open Arcade Architecture Forum, an association of companies brought together under the auspices of computer chip manufacturer Intel Corp in order to launch a PC-based video game platform, was held during the last week in August.

As many as 15 software development companies were present at the meeting with sneak previews of products aimed at the arcade and location-based entertainment markets. They included: Angel Studios, BlueByte, GreyStone, Rage, Mango Grits, Harmonix, GT Interactive, Leaping Lizard, Vivid, Interactive Light, Kalisto, Ubisoft, and Inner Workings.

"There were about 120 people from all over the world," said Intel's director of arcade market development Albert Teng. "I was impressed because I thought there was more disagreement, but people are really working together for a common cause."

That cause, according to Teng, is working to develop a base of on-location hardware that will provide the showcase for a stream of software titles developed using PC technology. While critics decry a heavy focus on hardware for its latent potential to become "just another proprietary system," Teng said the early focus must be on hardware to drive the model forward.

"I think the dollar commitment (from game developers and publishers) will be there next year," Teng contended. "The manufacturers (of hardware) are ready now."

In fact, a number of companies that already make hardware in one fashion or another expressed their willingness to work with members of the game development community to bring titles to fruition in the coin-op industry. Those companies included Dynamo, HanaHo ArcadePC, Happ Controls, and H. Betti Industries.

The last, H. Betti, was touted by Intel as a company with direct or indirect interest in 30 percent of the coin-op marketplace. H. Betti will work with game development company Interactive Light to bring out as many as three games, providing advice and support on technical issues, game play, and distribution. The two companies previously collaborated on the popular PC-based arcade game *Home Run Derby.*

Teng said it is this type of experience and leadership that the forum was intended to promote. "H. Betti and Interactive Light had to go out and do it alone and the game is still profitable," he said. "Support from companies like that is important. They have credentials in the coin-op marketplace."

Companies like H. Betti will apparently be serving not only as a quasi software publisher for software developers but also fill in the need for technology or system integrators, bundling hardware components in order to help establish a base of operator-run game machines. Distribution will reportedly take place through already established channels.

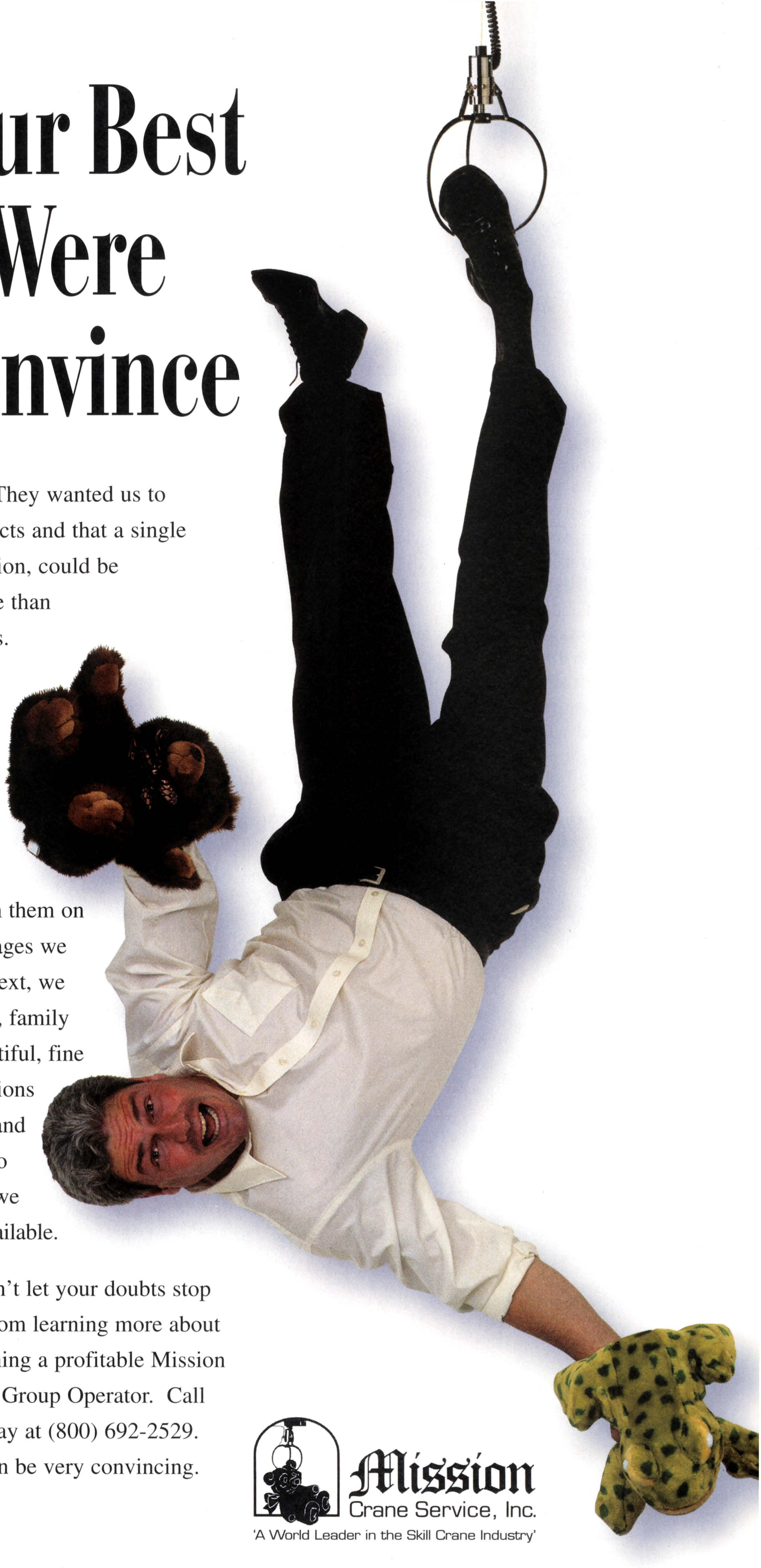
"This forum is becoming a networking space for companies and it turned out to be a huge matchmaking event," Teng said. "When they got together things really happened."

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

In addition to commitments from several coin-op companies to work

Reaction was mixed with some players expressing enthusiasm over the strides being made to bring games to the marketplace and others bemoaning the focus on hardware as a setback in the drive to achieve a truly open game platform.

Some Of Our Best Operators Were Hard To Convince



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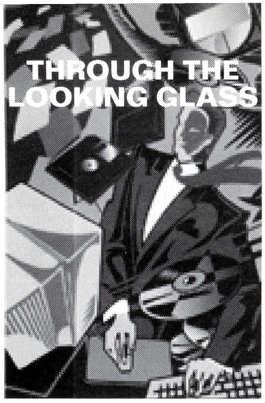


with the software development community, the forum's first meeting also showcased the introduction of several new technologies that will make the process of developing games all the easier.

For its part, Intel announced a revision to its Open Arcade Architecture specification that will include a recommendation of the newly available NLX form factor motherboard. That motherboard, which is based on the newly introduced 440LX AGPset, should make it easier to upgrade arcade systems with new games and provide exceptional graphics, according to Intel.

"This will make all of the things we have talked about come true," said Teng. "You can now deliver the next level in 3-D graphics in the interactive form."

Quantum3D also announced the introduction of a turnkey solution product that will let developers simulate an arcade system as a game is being produced by providing peripherals such as a steering wheel, large monitor, etc. "They can modify the game in development to see how it will play back in an arcade system," Teng explained.

THE FLIP SIDE OF THE COIN

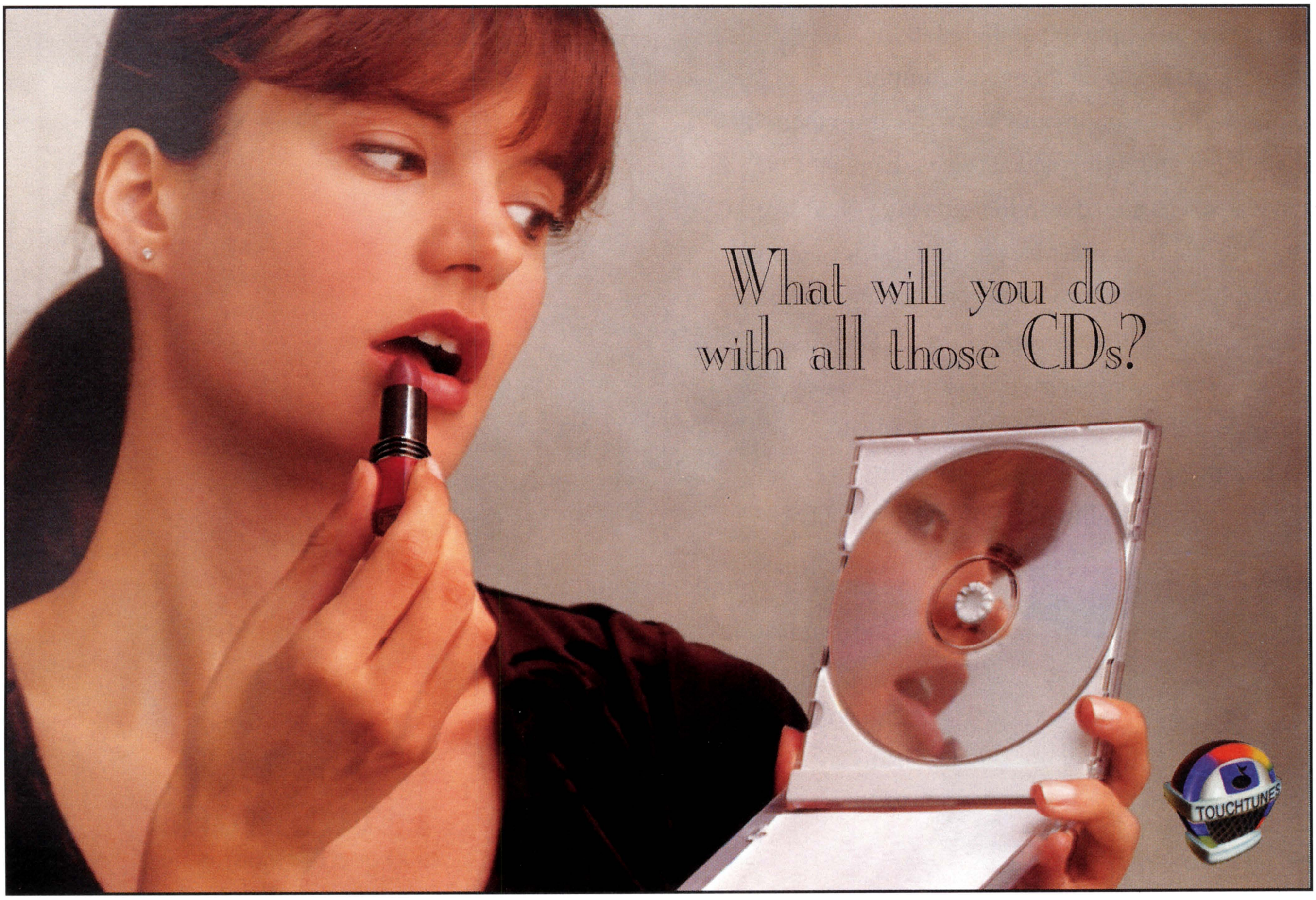
Not everyone walked away from the forum's initial meeting satisfied. In fact, representatives of the National Amusement Network Inc. (NANI), an AMOA-supported project that aims to launch networked video games nationwide, said the meeting raised many concerns about the possibility of having an open platform.

> ***"This forum is becoming a networking space for companies and it turned out to be a huge matchmaking event."***

"As a credit to Intel, they are trying very hard to get it going," said NANI's John Klayh. "But there are some very substantial issues remaining and there's a lot of confusion that the meeting did not clear up. It was more of a hardware love-in. Everybody knows how to build a box. Nobody knows how to drive a content model."

Klayh said his concern was the focus on hardware configurations instead of the pressing need for investment in software titles. "This missing link is a bunch of games that adhere to a common standard and that standard is not hardware," he said, adding that an open platform and portability will rely more on software than hardware.

The problem, Klayh said, is that even if hardware systems developed by different companies are compatible, there is still the question of software delivery systems or shells which talk to other components and peripherals in the game machine, including the controls and coin or bill mechanisms. While Klayh limited his comments to the issue of focus, others were more blunt in their criticism of the priorities set forth at the meeting. "I could have closed my eyes and it was the same thing we heard five years ago when we were first getting started with NANI," said former AMOA president and current NANI president Gene Urso of Madi-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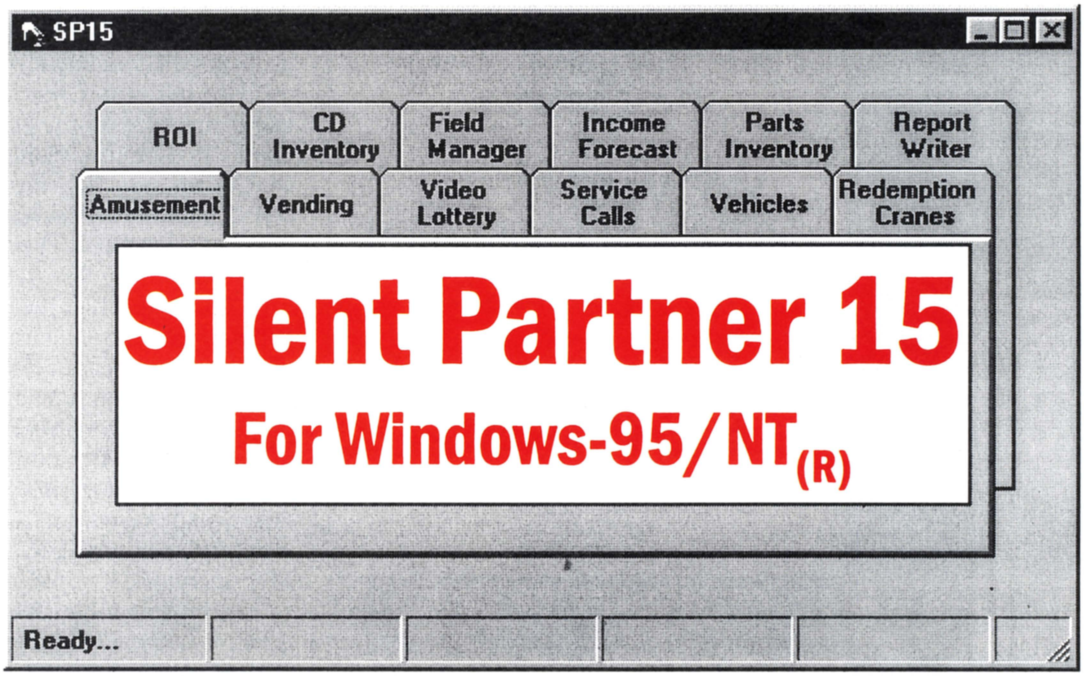
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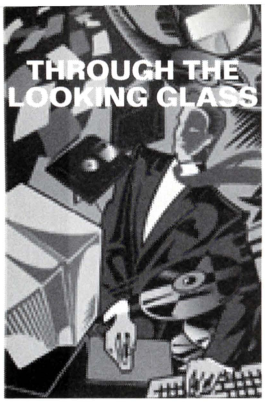

son Coin Machine in Madison, Wis. "Everybody wants to have their own 'open' platform and the operator is in the same position of having this hardware for this platform and this hardware for this platform."

Despite this criticism, Urso said that some of the games presented at the meeting were impressive in terms of their graphics and 3-D quality and praised the fact that a number of the games looked as if they were being designed for street locations.

When asked about the NANI project, Teng said that networking can be achieved only after games have been installed on location and all technical (i.e. hardware) issues have been worked out first. "Networking is quite complex," he said. "We need to get games out and network them in a local space before you try to put together a larger infrastructure."

The Wave Report on Digital Media, put out by the research firm 4th Wave which compiled for Microsoft some of the original data on a PC video game platform, also took issue with some of the goals set forth at the forum meeting.

"Any concept to revitalize this industry must go far deeper than a motherboard or a hardware specification," wrote industry analyst John Latta. "In order to fix these problems one must be focused on the food chain. That is, every segment of the industry from the game developer to the operator and the player must be addressed."

Latta contends that a $1 per minute business model—which was reportedly discussed at the open arcade meeting—will not work. In fact, the price per play must be lowered (to possibly $5 per hour) and new revenue strategies between publishers/manufacturers including a royalty model must be considered if each link is to prosper.

"One of the first items on the agenda, to get the industry moving into an evolving business model, is to articulate in the clearest way possible how operators can make money again," concluded Latta. "Operators are seasoned individuals who have been there and done that. They could care less about buying PCs. What they want is to make their business healthy and profitable again. It is not a given that the PC leads to the latter result."

So the question remains, as it was posed from the very beginning of the debate, whether the introduction of video game product utilizing PC technology will make more economic sense for operators—both street and FEC operators.

In searching for an answer to that question, all roads apparently lead to Atlanta and this month's AMOA Expo, which has dedicated a portion of its show floor for companies striving to make this idea a reality.

"We want to show solutions that are close to production and a lot of technology applications that are available," said Teng, adding that those applications will include an upgrade kit that will allow operators to put a state-of-the-art PC board in existing cabinets.. "I think we will have a complete product line for the operator."

"The AMOA is going to be interesting," said Urso. "The operator has his destiny in his own hand. It will be interesting to see what he does." ▲

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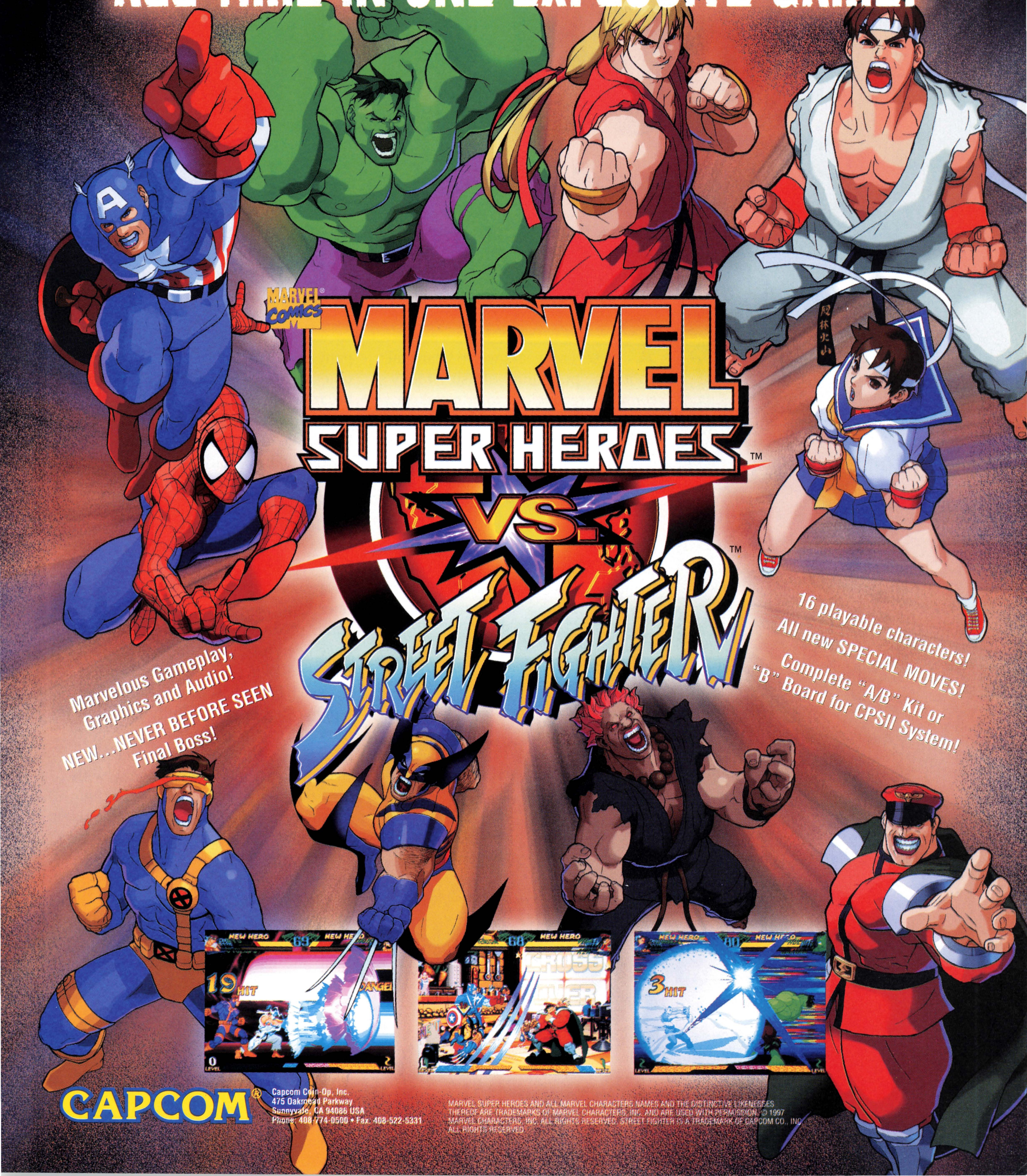
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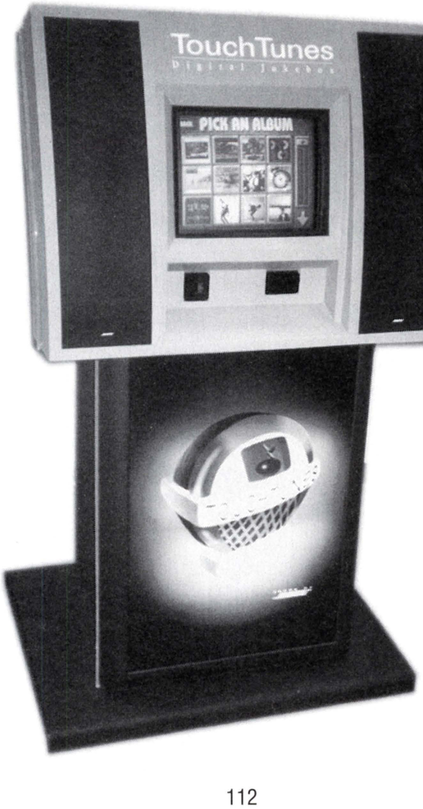
TOUCHTUNES ushers in jukebox REVOLUTION

by John Margold

When we heard that John Margold had become the vice president of sales and marketing for TouchTunes Digital Jukebox, we were intrigued. During his stint at NSM, he penned an article about digital music, proclaiming it not quite ready for the market. Now here he was poised to take on the task of selling digital music to the market. Had he changed his mind? Is the technology really ready for market? And just what is digital music anyway? We asked John to give us, and operators who are wondering what's going on, a basic, introductory level article on TouchTunes' plans for the future.

For several years we've heard talk about the possibility of using today's computer technology to bring jukeboxes to the next level. With hard drive stroage capacity and high-speed modems, we could clearly see the possibility of freeing the operator from the need to buy compact discs. However, there were obstacles that needed to be overcome. If an operator didn't buy the CD, how would the record company make its profit? (If the record company can't make money, it will surely object!) How could CD quality sound be reproduced without CDs? How could new music be added to the jukebox while on location? And most importantly, how could an operator improve his financial position using this technology?


This new Bose-manufactured prototype was introduced in mid-August to a group of test operators.

These obstacles were not overcome easily or quickly, but after better than four years of hard work, TouchTunes has resolved each of these issues. Engineers and programmers have solved some of the problems, while others have been resolved by business and finance people.

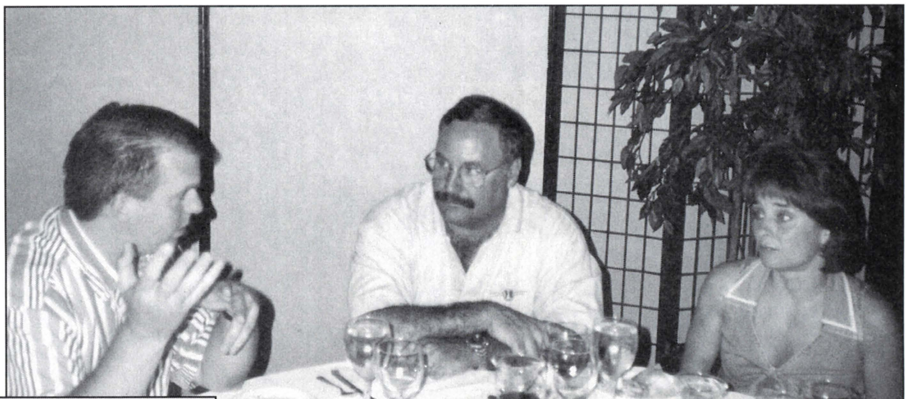
TouchTunes has been the only company so far to successfully negotiate the right to use music from the record companies. (Five out of six record labels have signed agreements with TouchTunes allowing the use of their music for a 120-day test. Final details are being ironed out for the long-term agreements.) TouchTunes has also been granted performance rights by the Jukebox Licensing Office.

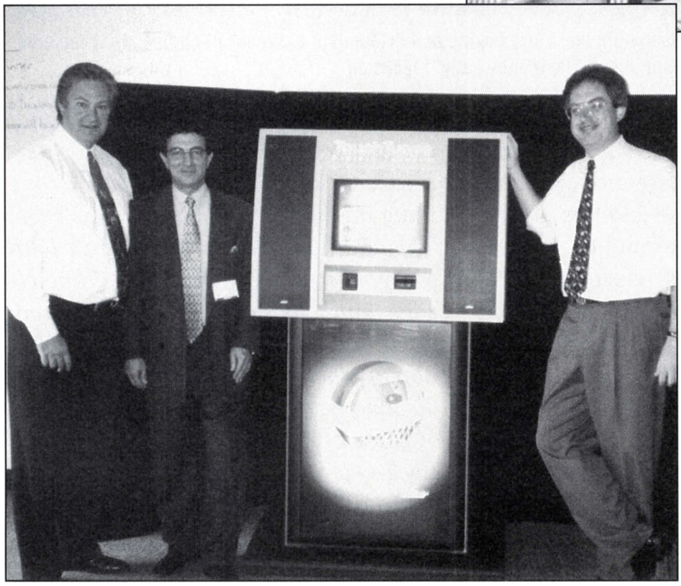
The sound quality issue has been easier than the record licensing issue. With the help of Bose Corp., TouchTunes has developed a jukebox with incredible sound reproduction. Bose is well known for its quality in consumer and professional audio circles. There is no doubt that together TouchTunes and Bose will be leaders in the pay-for-play arena.

HOW IT WORKS

The 500 songs that are stored in the jukebox's hard drive are reproduced to the record label's requirements for CD quality. Adding new music is what keeps a jukebox vibrant and collections high. With traditional jukeboxes, an operator is constantly purchasing new 45s or CDs. Most CDs have one or two popular songs while the rest of the disc is never played.

TouchTunes offers a cost effective alternative. As new music becomes available, an operator may order the new songs from a special menu on the jukebox. Neither the location staff nor the customers can get to these screens unless the operator chooses to give them the key. If the hard drive has a full com-





Top photo: Sales manager Dan McAllister enjoying some dinner conversation with Joe and Michelle Ferris of Ferris Music.

Bottom photo: TouchTunes's John Margold, Guy Nathan, and Tony Mastronardi with the prototype.

DIGITAL JUKEBOX UPDATE

Music technology on the march for the coming year

While the concept of a digitally downloading jukebox made its first big splash in industry circles more than two years ago, operators are still anxiously awaiting the arrival of a final product, and it appears they will have to wait a few months more for a New Year's introduction.

Three of the four companies working to bring new music technology to market have scheduled release in the first or second quarter of 1998, while a fourth says its product release date has yet to be finalized.

Canadian-based TouchTunes Digital Jukebox appears to be the closest to the finish line with plans to ship its product at the beginning of 1998. (See related story for more details on TouchTunes' plans.)

"The only concern is in the programming that makes all the screens operate the way we want them to," said vice president of sales and marketing John Margold from his Buffalo Grove, Ill., office. "Everything else will be ready."

Margold added that the nature of a downloading jukebox makes that one of the least worries. "If it's just the programming and software, we can deliver the product and then upgrade via phone line," he explained.

TouchTunes is bringing its product to market in conjunction with another Canadian-based firm, Bose, which is supplying its expertise in amplification and electronic engineering, and company president Tony Mastronardi is currently in negotiations to make permanent temporary royalty agreements with all but one of the major music companies. The last of the majors, German-based BMG, is also currently in negotiations with TouchTunes.

The company conducted a test this year using 20 prototypes with its computer network based at MCI headquarters in Richardson, Texas. "It was truly a joint effort between TouchTunes, MCI, and Bose," Margold said. "I don't think we are going to make too many changes."

TouchTunes will retain ownership of its jukeboxes and be responsible for paying music royalties and Jukebox License Office fees (which will be handled just like CD and 45 jukeboxes); operators who place the jukeboxes on location will share in the revenue. According to Margold, more than half of the jukebox operators in the United States are considering the TouchTunes program as an option.

OTHER PLAYERS

Traditionally a dart and video lottery terminal manufacturer, Rockford, Ill,-based Arachnid Inc., also has plans to introduce a digital jukebox sometime in the coming year. The company is going through the process

continued on following page

plement of music (500 songs), the operator may delete the songs that have lost their popularity and order new songs to take their place on the jukebox.

This downloading of new music will take place via existing phone lines. TouchTunes and MCI are working together. The jukebox will dial up a toll-free number, but the operator and the location will not be required to pay the telecommunications charge.

Now we come to the big question: How will this new technology benefit the operator? With traditional jukeboxes an operator buys the jukebox, buys a set-up of discs, buys new discs each month, and buys replacement parts once the jukebox is out of warranty. He may get 50 percent or 60 percent of the weekly collection, but after all that buying how much does he get to keep? Remember, it is not how much you get to count and carry back to the shop; it's how much you get to keep.

With TouchTunes an operator will have a smaller percentage (the operator, location, and TouchTunes all need to share from the same cash box), but he will get to keep more money. There is nothing to buy. The jukebox, music, record company payments, performance rights licenses, telecommunication charges, and replacement parts are all provided by TouchTunes. And without these burdens, an operator can keep more money.

If any of *Play Meter*'s readers would like to see how the TouchTunes program could impact their business, please call me at 1-888-338-JUKE and we can discuss the specific numbers. ▲

Operator Tony Urso of Madison Coin and Larry Levine and Art Paulser of Woburn Vending study the new machine. Sophie Forest of SoFinov ("The Money Lady") looks on.

[Editors note: If TouchTunes Digital JukeBox had the technical savvy to make a success of downloading music, one thing missing was industry knowledge. The addition of industry veteran John Margold will bring a wealth of knowledge and contacts that the company needs. John recently announced the addition of other music industry professionals like national sales manager Dan McAllister, who was most recently with Rock-Ola Mfg., and field service manager Ed Schmidt, whose industry experience spans decades. John told us that more additions will be forthcoming.]

DIGITAL JUKEBOX UPDATE

MUSIC TECHNOLOGY ***continued from previous page***

of royalty negotiations with the major music companies.

"We are still in the prototyping stages and have logistics to work out,"said Arachnid's jukebox project manager Arnie Penaloza. "We've gotten a lot of interest from operators already, but it's just a matter of dealing with the record labels."

As part of its approach, Arachnid is considering a strategy that would offset the cost of jukebox through advertising revenue. "We want to make sure the revenue stream goes not up into Arachnid but down to the operator," Penaloza said.

Arachnid's jukebox initiative was started almost eight years ago by its owner John Martin just about the time he purchased interest in the company. "We have, I believe, the basic patent," Martin told *Play Meter*. "I made a big bet on buying this company and I believe we are going to win big with this and our new dart game. I think it will rejuvenate the industry."

While the jukebox is little changed from a technological standpoint, Arachnid is currently reworking the cabinet shown at ASI `97. The company has no plans to exhibit its jukebox at any of the fall trade shows.

San Fransisco, Calif.,-based PlayNet Technologies, which stormed onto the scene last year touting a whole range of digital amusement products, had initially intended to introduce a jukebox this year. While music took a back seat to working out the kinks of its countertop game unit, PlayNet Web, the company still plans to bring out a jukebox next year.

The company's director of marketing Mitch Kampf said the jukebox hardware is currently in the testing stage and negotiations with the music companies are ongoing. "We've found that royalties have not been the big issue but encryption has," Kampf said. "It's a critical security factor for the labels."

According to Kampf, PlayNet is also in the process of re-examining its marketing, pricing, and revenue strategies, although he said no details have been finalized. The company still has plans to introduce jukeboxes that will accept credit cards. "That's obviously a major factor in looking at merchandise sales," he said.

A second Canadian company, Software Control Systems, introduced its own innovative music product, a music video kiosk, almost two years ago at ACME `96, but the firm has been working in the background for the past year retooling its system for final market release.

The company's Richard Brunette said the product is in the final stages of hardware configuration development and will hopefully be ready for this month's AMOA. "All I can tell operators is we are working with the former Bell Labs, now known as Lucent Technologies, and to keep your eyes open for the new system," Brunette said. ▲

AN OPERATOR'S **VOICE**

TONY URSO

Who kissed that Frog?

About two years ago we caught wind of another company that was going to take the industry by storm. My first thoughts were: a) grandma died and they had $10,000 cash to start the project; b) it's a twist on the old biz-op "exclusive rights for the territory with cash up front" scam; or c) they were for real.

The correct answer is "c."

Let's start at the beginning. The TouchTunes group along with speaker manufacturer Bose have spent millions to bring their jukebox to the market. They believed with better sound, on-line bookkeeping, and fast music downloading, they would have a hit.

Their first jukebox was not what was needed. It suffered from a furniture style cabinet coupled with both extra weight and a poor presentation. **Frog one and no prince.** Industry experts wrote them off. I also saw this concept fading fast but like dad told me, "You never know if you'll need them." We were friendly and wrote these guys off.

Their second jukebox was better. It worked and looked more like a jukebox. We applied for and received a test unit. After several false starts we were finally able to place one in the field. Oops! There were several design flaws: no coin capabilities, grounds weren't completed, no microphone capabilities, touch screen went bad, no speakers on the jukebox, and several other situations that were comical. Obviously, these guys didn't consult anybody in the industry. Too many basic things weren't thought out. **Frog two and it was the court jester.**

> ***"This was probably the first time we had a room of operators agree on anything."***

But we noticed several characteristics that emerged. First, when questions arose, the company called back—always by the end of the day. I mean ALWAYS! Second, there was a degree of professionalism and respect with all of our interactions. Third, their weakness turned out to be a strength. By not "knowing" our industry, they were able to think outside the box. They actively solicited ideas and incorporated them. **Frog number three with ears, but no prince...yet.**

Tony Urso (l) with his father Gene Urso.

On Aug. 9, we were in Boston with TouchTunes at the Bose factory. Bose took us around on an impressive tour. One morning Bose showcased several of its speakers. That was the first time I actually "felt" music. Later the company took us into a sound room. Again, we felt the music from speakers that were two-and-a-half-inch cubes! Very impressive.

We then had a round table discussion, complete with Bose engineers (no NIH syndrome—not invented here). Active dialog between everyone was encouraged. This was probably the first time we had a room of operators agree on anything. Usually, you get a dozen people and at least 50 different opinions!

TouchTunes unveiled a pre-production prototype of its jukebox. It looked like a jukebox with crystal clear sound (absolutely clear digital sound). Sound you can feel. After a few minutes Tony Mastronardi refocused our thinking and asked for more input. Think about it. Instead of basking in the glory of the design the company wanted improvement. After it was all done, there were several items everybody really liked (sorry, I can't disclose what they were), a few improvements, and some preferences. Basically, this prototype was for real. **The frog was a duke. Another kiss and the duke will be a prince!**

We look forward to future interactions with the professional, competent, and open-minded people at TouchTunes. ▲

Tony Urso of Madison Coin Machine in Wisconsin is an operator who literally grew up in the industry. His father, Gene, served a term as AMOA president, and both Gene and Tony have been following the new developments in the industry whether digital music or NANI. We thank Tony for taking the time to share his thoughts.

BATTLE
TECH

Coin Slots for Windows: 11 Arcades in 7 days

LARRY MUNDAY

I'm back from a long road trip across the West. I toured as many arcades as I could while I was out setting up people with the game revenue tracking program that I wrote, Coin Slots for Windows. I will explain the program in just a moment, but it's time for some name dropping, because everybody likes name recognition.

The adventure begins

My trip began from my home base at Po-Jo's Family Entertainment Center in Boise, Idaho. From there I pointed my car south and cast an eye on the horizon for Reno, Nev. My first stop was just south of Reno at a place called Boomtown. I arrived just in time for the gates to open, and I headed straight for the motion theatre. Bypassing the carousel and miniature golf course, I laid my money down for a trip to "Dino Island."

The ride was quite enjoyable even though the picture was extremely out of focus. After a few more hours and a great deal of money, I was on the road again on my way to Scandia of Sacramento. Between Reno and San Francisco, I ran across two more Scandias. One was just as fun as the other, but I digress.

San Francisco, the city by the bay, hosts two separate arcades on the same pier. One is owned by Namco America and the other by Sega. The dock in question is the famous Pier 39, which is the new home for The Bubba Gump Shrimp Company. Now it's time to head south again on U.S. 101 for Monterey. Just up the street from the Monterey Bay Aquarium, where they filmed some of "Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home," lies a fantastic nostalgic-looking arcade just up the hill from Cannery Row. This boardwalk-type palace of fun houses a carousel with laser tag upstairs.

Two days have passed since I left home and it's on to the happiest place on earth, Disneyland. The next day it's Universal Studios, and the day after that it's Magic Mountain. From there I jumped onto I15 and headed for the Nevada state line and Buffalo Bill's. After a 99-cent breakfast, a ride on the Desperado, and some time in the arcade, it's on to Las Vegas, the Disneyland for adults, and the third Sega Gameworks.

In my opinion, this is the creme de la creme of all arcades. This shining jewel in the desert houses a bar with Internet terminals, a restaurant, an absolutely huge game center, and in the middle of it all, there's a 40-foot mountain peak to climb. Before I turned my car toward Idaho and completed the 1,500 mile journey, there was one last Scandia to visit. All in all it was 11 arcades in seven days.

Coin slots for Windows

There are over 100 companies using this program, and you can, too, at half the original price. The R&D is paid for, and it's time to clear out the remaining stock. The program is actually two programs in one. The first part is a Shop Management and Game Repair Reference. The other half contains Game and Revenue Tracking software. Let's start with the first part.

In 1994 I wrote this program to assist me in looking up repair articles that had appeared in trade publications. If I am working on a particular game, I can type in the name of the game, and in seconds I am presented with a list of articles that have been written about that game.

All I have to do is go back to that issue and repair the game with the newfound knowledge. This first program also contains some other helpful ideas: a zip code locator, area code and time zone calculator, pinball database of nearly 2,000 machines dating back to 1938, a card file with addresses and phone numbers for 243 companies in the coin-op field, and an invoice and stock-tracking program. This little program takes care of all the parts in my shop. Whether the parts just came in, or are on the shelf, I know just where everything is, even if a part was just installed into a game.

I can even tell if a particular game is repeatedly going through the same part because the pro-

> **"It helps me answer questions about where a game has been and when, where it has made me the most money, and whether it was across town or on the other side of the room."**

gram keeps track of where the parts go. It comes in handy when it's time to sell a game because I have a repair history of every game I have and I can see what it cost me to maintain.

A year later I wrote the second half of this program to help me maintain a record of revenue for each game. It helps me answer questions about where a game has been and when, where it has made me the most money, and whether it was across town or on the other side of the room. That's right, believe it or not. A great deal of time is spent figuring out which row or aisle to place a game in order to reap its peak revenue collecting potential. There are lots of quick reports I can pull up in seconds to answer lots of these questions. I can do High/Low Sales or Department Sales. I use this report to see the sales of just the pinball machines or maybe just the dart boards. The Department Sales is a way to break down the information even more.

> **"The Compare Report lets me see at a glance if my sales match my meters."**

For example, instead of seeing what the video games have done, I can see what the driving games have done in comparison to the gun games or maybe the fighting games. Monthly Sales shows totals only and breaks each total into separate departments. The taxable report shows which of my games are taxed on its sales and which are taxed annually. The redemption report shows the name of the game along with the sales, coin meter sales, the amount of tickets dispensed, plus the average number of tickets won per coin. The crane report is similar to the redemption report but it will also tell me how many coins/plays it took to win a prize.

The Compare Report lets me see at a glance if my sales match my meters. There are two ways to view this report. One shows sales, metered sales, and the difference. The other report shows just the difference so I can show the staff how far the machine is off, without disclosing what the game has made. I take all of these raw numbers to the bookkeeper to do the books, but I don't use this program for my bookkeeping . It's a tool I use to help me make decisions.

I can't explain all of its features here, but if you would like to get this program, I am currently selling the remaining stock for more than 50 percent off the original sale price of $695. Until they are gone, the price is $295. I think I have about 10 or 15 units left. My number is (208) 376-6981, ext. 35. ▲

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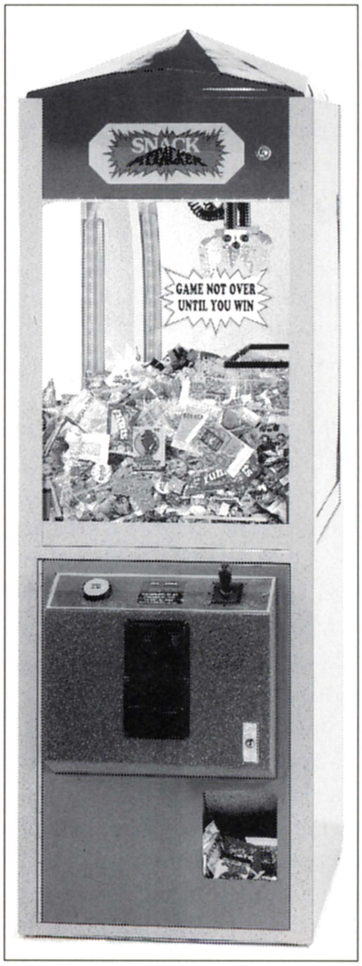

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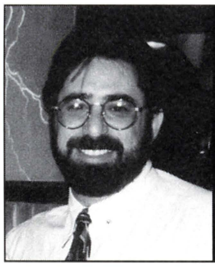
Back to **BASICS 3**



Michael Getlan is a third generation owner/operator of arcades and family entertainment centers and a member of IAAPA's Education, Technology, and Award Committees. He is director of operations for Amusement Consultants Ltd. of New Rochelle, N.Y., which operates 40 locations in 12 U.S. states and Central America, and is a frequent speaker at industry conventions.

Rotation of equipment—is it a necessary evil or a rejuvenating force? The choice of equipment helps determine the type of guest that a facility attracts. Frequent rotation attracts the serious player.

New equipment is marketed every three months in the industry, and staying on top of the trends can contribute greatly to the bottom line. Knowing the products is another key to success in operating a game room.

All equipment must work properly all the time. Communication systems must be set up within a facility to identify and resolve service issues as soon as possible. The first impressions of a piece of new equipment are especially important. Adventurous guests will be quickly turned off from playing a game that does not work properly.

Sometimes an operator or technician cannot get a machine to work properly. Remove such equipment from the game room floor and place it in an area away from the public. Allow sufficient time for parts to be ordered and the equipment repaired. Rotate out irreparable equipment as soon as it is determined that a game cannot be repaired correctly. Do not operate a game that will not work as designed.

Rotate equipment internally

Rotate equipment within the facility. Rotation creates the illusion that things have changed within the game room. Try clusters and bunches of equipment. Give the game room a new look frequently. And always view the arrangements from the customers' point of view.

Tournaments and contests are a great reason to rotate games internally. Place contest equipment in the best place for the actual competition within the center. Do not bring the contest and players to a crowded corner of the game room; move the games.

Sometimes games with odd shapes make internal rotation difficult. Use some creativity and the staff's suggestions to come up with different ways to use space to complement the look of the equipment, and place any artwork on the sides of the games. Try grouping games together by subject one week, then organizing them by size and shape the next week. Keep the guests guessing!

Bring new equipment into the facility

Bringing new equipment into the game room is a major component of any marketing plan for game room operation. Choose new equipment wisely. Read the trade publications. Play all games before purchasing them at trade shows and distributor open houses. Listen to sales professionals about all the game features and ask as many questions as possible.

Then talk to someone else who can provide a reference for that piece of equipment. If you don't know any other operators, you're not networking enough. Find other operators in non-competing markets and ask questions. Most operators will be happy to fill you in on their equipment successes (and failures) when they find out that you will not use the information in direct competition.

Remember that even redemption equipment must be rotated. If it's not, guests won't see anything new. One popular misconception is that equipment that redeems tickets or merchandise does not need rotation. This is false; just ask all the children's entertainment center operators who are out of business.

Know the market

The kinds of equipment that should be rotated in and out of a game room depends on the market and the type of facility. If the facility offers go-karts or laser tag, for example, this will influence the choice of equipment. And what kinds of equipment have been popular previously will also affect game choices.

What hooks the regular players? Is it driving games, shooting games, or fighting games? Is the redemption operation strong? Is the redemption equipment driving prize redemption?

Learn about the market. Conduct surveys if you operate a local game room. Most operations in tourist markets can locate demographic information easily, but local markets are best investigated by a facility's staff. Ask the staff what games are most requested. Take action, or the information gathering will be wasted.

Tourist markets require less rotation than local game rooms. But that does not mean that a game room in a hotel or tourist destination can afford to remain stagnant. Most serious players look for the latest and the greatest and will play elsewhere if they can't find the games that they are looking for. Rotate the games on a regular basis and the guests will continue to visit the center. ▲

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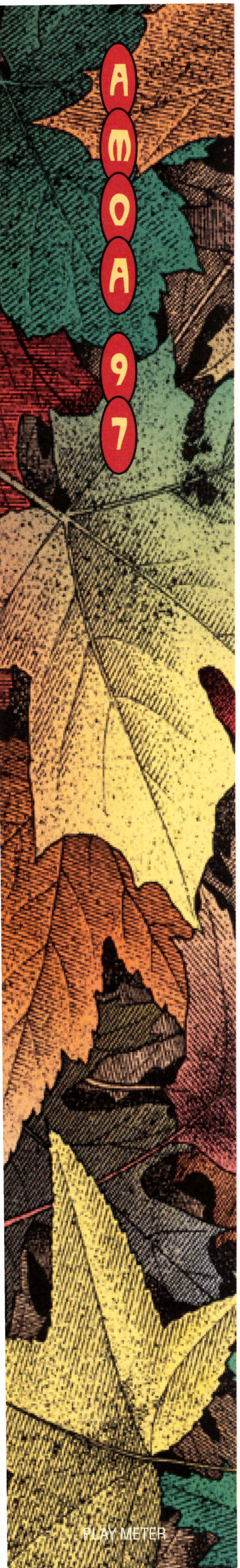
FRANKLY, MY DEAR, I LOVE ATLANTA IN THE FALL!

I don't know about you, but I can't even say Atlanta without picturing Scarlett O'Hara, Tara, Rhett Butler, Bonnie Blue, and of course, the raging fire that destroyed the city during the Civil War. But this 160-year-old city is much more than an expedition through factual and fabricated history. Scarlett was undeniable in our imaginations and on the big screen, while the Civil War thrust the country into a devastating reality.

VALERIE COGNEVICH



But Atlanta is bigger than even its legend suggests. For instance, did you know that transportation equipment is at the top of the list of products manufactured in Atlanta and 42 of the 50 largest transportation companies in the United States have offices there? And were you aware that Atlanta is a major convention city, and the Georgia World Congress Center features the largest single-level exhibition hall in the country? And did you know that faces of confederate war heroes Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and Jefferson Davis are carved on nearby Stone Mountain?

HISTORY

If you're grasping for one word to describe this Southern city, Atlanta can only be defined as enormous. Over 60 million people pass through the airport annually,and millions visit an array of tourist attractions.

But it wasn't always that way. Atlanta began its life in 1937 as a non-descript town called Terminus. The name reflected its location at the end of the line for the Western and Atlantic railroad. Someone apparently gave the name situation a little more thought, and the town was briefly renamed Marthasville in tribute to the Governor's daughter. In 1868, now named Atlanta for the Western and Atlantic railroad line, it was named the capital of Georgia and became a symbol of the New South.

Atlanta, nestled in the rolling foothills of northwest Georgia, figured prominently in the Civil War. Slavery ignited the war, which began in 1861. The slavery issue had been festering for some 40 years before it came to a tragic head. Simply put, the North abhorred the idea of slavery and, of course, the South favored it. As new territories opened, both sides wanted these territories to embrace their views. The Senate was virtually divided in half, neither the North nor the South having a majority. However, when Missouri asked to enter the Union as a slave state, the North challenged it, knowing it would put slavery opponents in the majority.

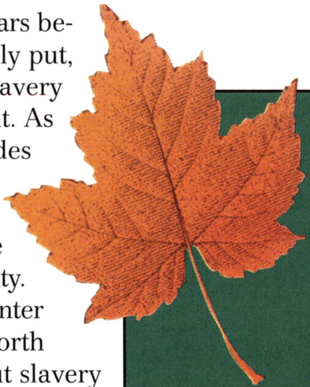
The Missouri Compromise in 1820 allowed Missouri to enter as a slave state, but Maine was admitted as free, once again assuring an equal division of slave and free states. In the future, according to the agreement, slavery was to be excluded from the territory north of the southern boundary of Missouri.

All was well as slave and free states lived in tolerated harmony. Then gold was discovered in California in 1848 and the country's fate was sealed. People began traveling to California to seek their fortunes, and the population swelled. The state asked to be admitted to the Union—as a free state. It was a horrible battle when it was understood that if California did indeed join as a free state, it would make the free states a majority. In 1850 Congress, which had been struggling to make peace, made another compromise. California was admitted as a free state, but the rest of the territory won in the Mexican War would be decided by its citizens.

But there would never be peace over this issue again. In 1854 agitation erupted with renewed fury as new settlers pushed into the new territories. The Kansas-Nebraska bill replaced the Missouri Compromise and the North and South began expressing desires to obtain Kansas. The South wanted it because it was far enough South to raise Southern products and slaveholders could reach it easily from Missouri.

By now the animosity between the North and South was nearly unbearable and peaked when Kansas was admitted as a free state in 1861 and, to the horror of slaveholders, Abraham Lincoln was elected president. The South, knowing ahead of time his views on slavery, had already decided that if he was elected it would leave the Union and form its own government. South Carolina led the way and 11 others followed; 23 states remained in the Union.

The war raged on with thousands of casualties on both sides, often with brother fighting



DID YOU KNOW?

Atlanta's Stone Mountain is the world's largest mass of exposed granite.

against brother. The turning point of the war has been reported to be the southern defeat at Gettysburg, Pa. and the fall of Vicksburg. By March, 1864 Gen. Ulysses Simpson Grant had gained a formidable reputation and placed in charge of all the federal armies. To direct a campaign against confederate Robert E. Lee, Grant placed Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman in charge.

ATLANTA FALLS

Sherman pursued the confederates toward Atlanta where he laid siege to it for 117 days. When the city finally surrendered, Sherman ordered everyone out and he torched the entire city. To show how destructive the fire was, only 400 out of the 4,500 buildings in Atlanta at the beginning of the siege remained standing after the fire.

As the flames died down and the city laid in ruins, Sherman made his famous march from Atlanta to Savannah. It was wide open country with no army to oppose him. On this march, Sherman's troops laid waste a strip of land some 60 miles wide extending from Atlanta to the sea. He captured Savannah just months before Lee surrendered his army to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia in April 1865, nearly four years to the day that the war began at Fort Sumter in April 1861.

HISTORICAL ATTRACTIONS

While Atlanta and the Civil War are closely associated, I'm not sure whether the fictionalized depiction of that fire that burned Atlanta to the ground was portrayed too realistically in the movie, "Gone With the Wind." It is this image that many of us carry in our memories. And since the author of the book, Margaret Mitchell, wrote her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel in a three-story, Tudor Revival mansion in Atlanta, it's no wonder the city is so entwined in the history of the Civil War.

While you're in Atlanta you may want to visit the site where Mitchell lived from 1925 to 1932 in what Atlantans have in past years affectionately referred to as "The Dump," after it was converted to an apartment building. The Margaret Mitchell House is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. You'll see a multitude of displays and information on Mitchell's life and understand the impact of her book. "GoneWith the Wind" has been a tribute to Mitchell's short life.

Let's face it, Atlanta is famous for its colorful history from its humble beginnings in 1837 to the unsolved bombing during the most recent Olympics. There's something to pique just about everyone's interest. A visit to the History Center lets you explore Civil War history and tour two historic homes: the 1928 Swan House and the Tullie Smith Farm, a plantation circa 1840 complete with outbuildings. There's also the Coca-Cola Cafe if you're ready for lunch.

DID YOU KNOW?

Coca-Cola was invented in Atlanta and first sold in a drugstore on Peachtree Street in 1886.

The Fernbank Museum of Natural History offers "A Walk Through Time in Georgia," taking you through the chronological development of life on earth. There's a gallery filled with hands-on interactive exhibits dealing with light and sound and the IMAX theatre.

You can even visit the actual site of the Battle of Atlanta at Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park in Marietta. It features nearly 3,000 acres complete with nature trails and a small museum housing Civil War memorabilia.

It may seem morbid to encourage you to visit a cemetery, but those of us from New Orleans are used to making that suggestion. Remember, we bury our folks above ground because of our below sea level elevation. It's a sight to behold! Anyway, Atlanta's Oakland Cemetery has confederate soldiers, Georgia governors, "Gone With the Wind" author Margaret Mitchell, and grand-slam golfer Bobby Jones to name a few. This circa 1850s cemetery is a treasure trove of Victorian funeral statuary.

It would be only fitting to have a really cool railroad museum in a city founded simply because it was at the end of the line for the railroad. Yep, there is such a museum, the Southeastern Railway Museum in Duluth that features over 70 pieces of rolling stock including vintage stream locomotives, historic wooden cars, and the 1911 Pullman car used by President Harding, all on a 12-acre site.

The Atlanta Brewing Co. is history in the making. It's the oldest microbrewery, producing Red Brick Ale, Golden Lager, and seasoned beers. Don't sample too many of them if you're expected back at the show for an important meeting!

One of our most recent presidents came from the Atlanta area and in honor of him Atlanta has the Jimmy Carter Library and Museum. His life and his administration are shown in film, video, and an array of exhibits. There's also a cafe with an outdoor patio with a view of the Atlanta skyline.

The Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change takes visitors back to a tragic time in our country's history. Dr. King personified social change and his life, cut short by an assassin's bullet, tore through the heart of America. Visit the King Center site, Dr. King's grave, his home, and the Ebenezer Baptist Church where he preached.

Underground Atlanta

Everyone who has asked what to do in Atlanta invariably hears about Underground Atlanta. And you've probably heard it's a great place to go shop, eat, and party, but maybe you're wondering exactly what is it and why it's there. You're about to find out. About seven decades ago, a mass of concrete bridges were built to elevate the street system in downtown Atlanta one level to improve traffic flow. Many businesses followed the traffic up and the original underground level was virtually forgotten. It was in ruins when in 1968 the five-block area was named a historical site and was transformed into a mecca of entertainment. Today the Underground Atlanta entertainment center attracts millions of visitors to an array of restaurants, shops, and special events.

Drink Coke

One of the key events in Atlanta was the invention of Coca-Cola, first sold in a drugstore on Peachtree Street in 1886. You can learn more about Coke's history at the World of Coca-Cola, complete with 450,000 square feet filled with memorabilia, video presentations, and a moving sculpture that depicts the bottling process. There's also a recreation of a 1930s soda fountain, vintage commercials, and the largest collection of Coke merchandise in the world.

Family Entertainment

Just outside of Atlanta you can make peace with the kids for having dragged them through every museum in town. Mountasia Family Fun Centers features a beautiful themed miniature golf course, video and redemption arcades, bumper boats, go-karts, and more. Or treat them to a blood-pumping race at Malibu Grand Prix in Gwinnett County and then play games in the arcade.

If you've never visited a Dave & Buster's location, now's your chance. There's one just outside of Atlanta in Marietta. You'll see the attractions that have made these adult locations so popular.

Stone Mountain

This 825-foot high mountain is the world's largest mass of exposed granite. It was formed over 300 million years ago when a surge of molten lava beneath the earth's surface cooled, built up, and eroded the earth above it, eventually exposing the dome-shaped rock. In 1923 work began on a three-acre carving of the three war heroes mentioned above. The project was finished 50 years later.

The 3,200-acre Stone Mountain Park includes the Mountaintop Skylift, paddle wheel riverboat rides, the Lasershow, and an antebellum plantation. There are also some other attractions you won't want to miss, including the Antique Car & Treasure Museum and the Confederate Hall's War in Georgia Museum depicting Sherman's march through Georgia.

The surrounding area

If you brought your family, they won't even care that you're focused on business with little time for play when they have so many things to do. They can rent a car and head to Historic Marietta with its quaint town square complete with

DID YOU KNOW?

Peachtree Street, Atlanta's central thoroughfare, follows the route of an old Indian trail.

antique shops, historic homes, and Civil War sites. Or encourage them to visit Historic Roswell with its antebellum homes, historic sites, tours, nature trails, and ships housed in period buildings. The town was founded in 1839 by Roswell King and his son Barrinton and there's plenty of history to make it worthwhile.

If the family hasn't yet tired of visiting historic sites, Athens is just about an hour from downtown Atlanta. It's called the gateway to Georgia's Antebellum Trail and features richly preserved Old Southern homes and the Georgia Museum of Art to name but two of the attractions in Athens.

DID YOU KNOW?

Atlanta's first name was Terminus, reflecting its location at the end of the Western and Atlantic Railroad line.

TIME TO EAT

There are restaurants by the score, but I'm sure you'll feel more comfortable asking someone who lives in Atlanta to recommend a really good restaurant. Good idea. We've done that for you! David Capilouto of Greater Southern was glad to give you these "inside" tips on where to make plans for dinner.

If your taste buds are tingling in anticipation of a mouth-watering steak, here are David's picks of steak restaurants:

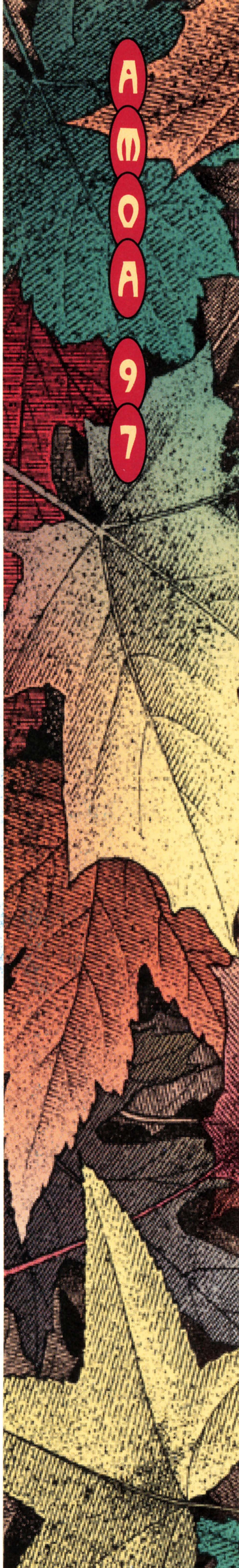
Brookwood Grill, casual American cuisine including fresh fish and ribs (261-0102); Buckhead Diner, billed as Atlanta's favorite casual restaurant (262-3336); Bone's, on the top 10 list for best steak restaurants in the country (237-2663); Chops, called Atlanta's Tiffany's of steakhouses (262-2675); Country Place, with a Mediterranean feel (881-0144); Dailey's, a converted warehouse (681-3303); Hard Rock Cafe, which needs no introduction (688-7625); Longhorn Steaks, with 19 locations (351-6086); The Mansion, a 1885 Victorian mansion with a beautiful view (876-0727); Morton's of Chicago, the famous steakhouse you've enjoyed in the Windy City (577-4366); Pano's & Paul's, which David describes as the elite steak restaurant (261-3662); Planet Hollywood (523-7300); Ruth's Chris, the steak house made famous in New Orleans (365-0660); Sun Dial, which David says is great for atmosphere since it is on the 72nd floor and revolves around the city (589-7506); and Tiburon Grill with hand-picked fresh seafood and a fireplace (892-2393).

If steak isn't what you're craving, you might enjoy one of these other places:

For Continental Cuisine: The Abbey, Atlanta's most famous and awarded restaurant (876-8532); Anthony's, in a 1797 antebellum plantation house setting (262-7379); Nikolai's Roof Restaurant, featuring classic French and authentic Russian specialties in an elegant setting (221-6362); 103 West Restaurant, which David calls very elegant (233-5993); and The Pleasant Peasant, with intimate charm in a New York-style bistro (874-3223).

Looking for something a little different? Look no further than these restaurants: Dante's Down the Hatch for both food and entertainment (266-1600); Les Halles, a Parisian bistro specializing in French cuts of beef and classic dishes (584-9900); Alfredo's, serving fresh Italian dishes (876-1380); LaGrotta Ristorante Italiano, the name says it all for scrumptious Northern Italian dishes with homemade pasta (231-1368); Maggiano's Little Italy, a pre-war little Italy-style restaurant serving hearty portions (816-9650); San Gennaro, with its award-winning calamari and homemade marinara sauce (636-9447); Benihana, for food prepared hibachi-style at your table (552-9629); Nakato, with its simple but beautiful Japanese decor with separate rooms for different menus (873-6582); A Taste of New Orleans—what else do we need to say! (874-5535); The Atlanta Fish Market, for Atlanta's freshest fish (262-3165); Mara's Seafood Grill, featuring fresh seafood in understated elegance (874-7347); Horseradish Grill, this southern cuisine restaurant was named in the top 25 restaurants in the country (255-7277); and Mary Mac's Tea Room, a revival of genuine Southern hospitality and home-style food (876-1800).

Some info provided by the Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau. ▲



Coinman Interview

JERRY DERRICK

As a 20-year veteran of the AMOA board of directors, Jerry Derrick of Derrick Music Co. in Charleston, W. Va., brings a wealth of both association and industry experience to his tenure as this year's AMOA president. We recently took the opportunity to talk with Jerry and newly appointed AMOA executive vice president Jim Weir about the past year, which saw many new changes proposed and enacted within the association, as well as the association's future.

What has been the most rewarding aspect of your year as AMOA president?

Jerry: Traveling to the other states to see what they have been doing legislatively. Being able to do things for other peoples' businesses has probably been the biggest value to me and the biggest value to the members.

Conversely, what has been the biggest challenge of being the head of the association?

Jerry: Working on the proposed restructuring of AMOA. We have been getting into three areas: allowing manufacturers to sit on the board, changing the size of the board, and changing the name of the association. That's what we as a board have approved. Now, we have to see if the membership will approve it as well.

How would you like your presidency to be remembered in the coming years?

Jerry: For this year's convention. The way things are going to fall into place with the technology and the developer's row could mark the biggest change to the industry for a long time to come.

You were thrust at a young age into running your father's business after his death. What lessons did you learn from that experience, and how have you used that in your own career?

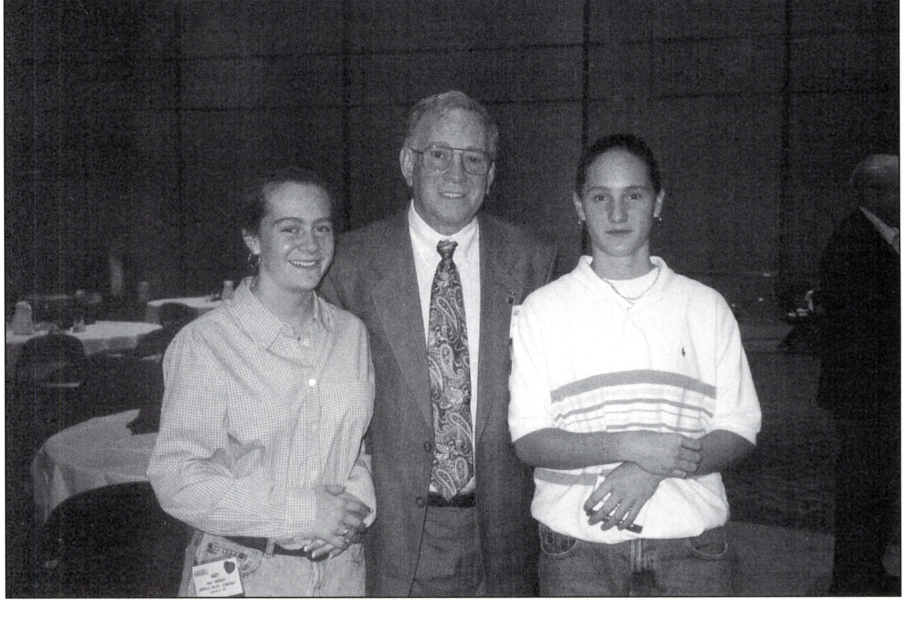
Jerry: When I was growing up, about the only thing I knew about the business was running around the route with the boys who worked for him. I would do a little checking and changing machines. All of a sudden, I had to come in, do all the buying, deal with the locations, and try to support not only myself but my mother and my sister.

How did that contribute to your success?

Jerry: It makes you a whole lot stronger. You had to become stronger with the competition in this industry that was just as tough back then as it is today. It makes you work harder and realize that you really do get out of it what you put in.

How has your membership in

Jerry with his two daughters Amy (l) and Jene.



AMOA contributed to your success in business?

Jerry: There has been a lot of communication and learning through talking to one another and attending seminars. You get a chance to learn from the experience of operators in other areas of the country. There is a lot of value in learning from that experience before you have to do it yourself.

When where you first named to the AMOA board of directors?

Jerry: I was first named in 1977 to fill an unexpired term for one year, and then in 1979, the year I got married, I was named again to serve a full term.

What is the biggest lesson you have learned from a fellow association member?

Jerry: Probably the biggest thing was when our state was thinking about video lottery. Phil Benson had been through the experience in Montana, and his knowledge was something that we used more than anything else. I would say that was the biggest lesson. He told us the things to do and things to watch for. That was probably the most important advice.despite the fact that it has never come to pass.

How do you compare your experiences in AMOA with those as a member and four-time president of you state association?

Jerry: In the national association, we are looking at the problems of the entire industry, dealing with Washington and with issues in states across the country and passing information along to each other like I said before. On a state level, you have your legislatures, you local counties, your cities, your licensing laws, etc., that affect the business. It's really about the same with the exception of the entities you are dealing with.

With the staff cuts and money being trimmed from the budget (as reported in last month's issue of *Play Meter*), what financial shape is AMOA in overall?

Jerry: AMOA is one of the strongest associations you can find. We have had some ups and downs, but we're still in good shape.

What have been some of the financial challenges the association has faced this year?

Jerry: I'll let Jim answer that one.

Jim: The process that we went through in June (designating large cuts in funding and a 50 percent reduction in staff) was the culmination of 10 months of work looking at resources and revenue and matching up your staffing levels and your projects and priorities with those resources. This is a process that was identified several years ago. We haven't seen the operator base increasing significantly. There has been some industry consolidation. We are taking a good look at the Expo. I think the board and the executive committee have stepped up to the plate. We are doing what every other organization needs to do in making some midcourse changes. It did involve some people and dollars getting shifted from one project to another, and, in reality, we are looking to cut our expense budget to keep it in line with what we think is reasonable.

There is a general perception on the part of many that the National Amusement Network Inc. has drained money out of the AMOA budget. Is that the case?

Former AMOA president Leoma Ballard (l) and AMOA staff member Kim Rundle (c) with Jerry.

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Bill Carnohan of the Amusement & Music Operators of Virginia presents an award to then outgoing West Virginia Music & Vending Association president Jerry Derrick.

Jerry: I don't think it has. We have spent money as an investment in N.A.N.I., which I think will help a lot of operators in times to come. It seems like every time we get within one step of something significant, another issue comes up. But everything I have been hearing from the test has been positive. It looks like things are on a good course right now.

Jim: The investment has been significant in terms of dollars, but the feeling is that we are just about to turn the corner in terms of this concept being very successful. To date, there has not been revenue coming back. But the inspiration is that this is an operator-driven concept. If it works correctly, AMOA is not going to get a lot of money but operators will move into a whole new arena. That's really what this is all about.

Jerry: Like I mentioned earlier about developer's row and the initiatives by Microsoft and Intel, the time for N.A.N.I. to come to the forefront is now.

How much money has been spent on the N.A.N.I. project?

Jim: Over more than three years, the investment is somewhere near $500,000. We're not talking about the inclusion of staff time. Just hard cash investment.

Has there been any talk about letting N.A.N.I. go its own way, or is that even possible?

Jerry: I think anything is possible, but there hasn't been any talk about it. However, like any business, if someone came along and there was the chance to make a profit, it would probably be for sale. Right now, there has not been any discussion like that.

Do you foresee a revival of the former government relations program with staff in Washington or is the time for that type of intense monitoring past for the association?

Jerry: We've had a very busy year in Washington this year with Valis & Associates as our representative. We went up with the American Amusement Machine Association to lobby for the dollar coin. We were there on the video violence issue, and I don't

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think you could find a more intense effort with more publicity than you have this year with cigarette vending. We've been involved in all three very heavily.

On cigarettes, if we can come out of it with lock-out devices or a settlement that will be very positive. Between a third and a half of our members say they operate cigarette vending machines. If they loose the machines, but can get part of the $360 billion in settlement money—Clinton says it may run over $500 billion—I think that would represent a good year.

Jim: Valis & Associates really are our staff in Washington now. Even though it's not the Smith, Bucklin & Associates people there, we have intensified our efforts in Washington as opposed to curtailing them and you will probably see that continuing. It's been an unusual year. The issues Jerry mentioned have all been very hot and all involving our members. There's been a lot of time and discussion spent on these issues. We have, in a sense, changed suppliers in Washington. We chose to go with Wayne Valis because of all the things we are seeing today with these key issues. They are a very powerful lobbyist organization in Washington and provide a whole different level of representation than the Smith, Bucklin people.

Jerry: Another issue that is popping up is this parallel issue, which I am going to have to deal with a little and (incoming president) Don Hesch is going to be faced with.

We're glad you brought that up. What are your thoughts as AMOA president on that issue?

Jerry: As of right now, we have no information about what is transpiring on either side (of the lawsuit between Sega and Worldwide Video). From my understanding, it's not a board issue but more of a graphics issue. It just depends on how far either side pushes it.

In your travels as AMOA president this year, what have been some of the more interesting events you have attended?

Jerry: Missouri was a state that has a new startup association. It was very interesting to see a new group having a good convention. Texas had its battle with a pending redemption bill, and its association grew from 70 or 80 to 200 members at its meeting along with achieving success in fighting the bill. Last year I went to Wyoming for (former AMOA president) Randy Chilton, and this year I traveled to Montana. They are two beautiful states. You get out West, and it's totally different than what I am used to in the East—just wonderful country and some good operators out there. In every state, there are interesting people to meet and issues to discuss.

Jerry visits Martha Austin (c) and Stan Williams of Williams Enterprises at last year's Illinois Coin Machine Operators Association's annual state show.

We went to London, England, for the BACTA summit. There were people from all over the world, and it's a whole different type of show. You have got just a few operators that control most of the market. One brewer may operate 60,000 pieces of equipment and they control the locations too. It

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has been a learning experience in more ways than one.

How do you evaluate the health of state associations across the country?

Jerry: Most of the state associations we have talked to and visited, especially ones like Wisconsin, Illinois, and others that have a tournament or state show, are strong and healthy. Some states like here in West Virginia don't have a big treasury, but when they've got something to do they just get together and take care of the job.

Jim: Generally speaking, I think the state associations are pretty healthy. If you read the vital statistics they are doing OK. A lot of them bring value to their local members. I interact with these people daily and think, from my standpoint, they are doing fine.

As outgoing president, can you give us some of your thoughts on the proposals for changing the structure of the AMOA board?

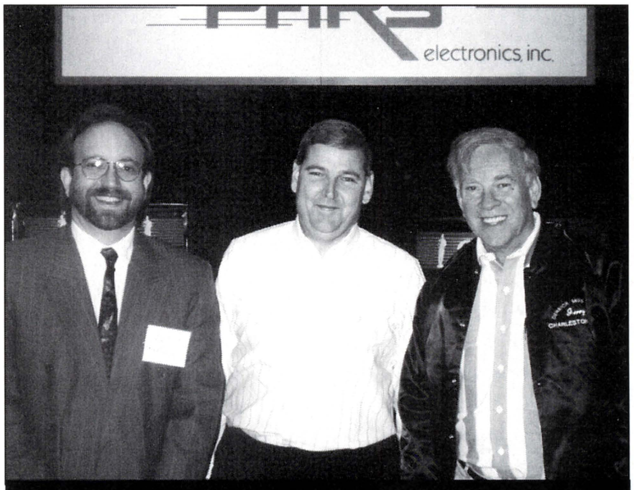
Jerry: They were approved by the board, after coming out of the executive committee and the finance committee. Now it's up to the membership. I don't know how it's going to be voted on—as a package or three different issues. I don't think that has been decided.

Do you expect them to pass?

Jerry: It's been ratified by the board so that's a pretty good representation of the states.

Do you think there is any danger with having manufacturers sit on the board?

Jerry: In my travels, I have heard lots of opinions. Some people have said yes it may be a problem while others welcome them with open arms. Now, it's really up to the membership to have a say in who they want to run the association.



Jerry, sporting a black leather jacket, along with Lee Wesson (l) of Peachtree Music and H.A. Devlin, then of PGI, at the West Virginia Music & Vending Association's state show in 1992.

As you come to the end of your term as president, do you have any changes you might suggest to the board or the association as a whole from your perspective?

Jerry: I think we've got too many committees and too many people doing the same thing: maybe not exactly the same thing but at least working on the same issues from different perspectives or committees.

What advice to you have to pass on to Don Hesch as he takes the association reins?

Jerry: Don has been right there with us every step of the way. When you come through the officers' chairs, there's not a whole lot of advice to pass on. He has been doing some of the traveling. He knows as much as anyone about what's going on in the association. When you make it to president, you know every move the association is making. No one person makes a decision. The year as president, you are more of an ambassador for the association and the industry.

Here's the toughest question, and the last. Are you ready to have your necktie sacrificially sheared in order to join the past president's council?

Jerry: After an entire year as president, it's definitely time to step down and let somebody come in with new ideas and new priorities. I have never been a big fan of those neckties anyway. ▲

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Schedule of EVENTS

SHOW DETAILS

WED., OCT. 22

3 p.m.-8 p.m.—Registration

THU., OCT. 23

8 a.m.-5 p.m.—Registration
8 a.m.-1:30 p.m.—Seminars
10 a.m.-5 p.m.—Exhibits Open
10:30 a.m.-3 p.m.—Optional Tour
Noon-2 p.m.—State Association Meeting (by invitation)
3 p.m.—Hesch Drawing
5 p.m.-7:30 p.m.—Member Welcome Reception

OPTIONAL TOURS

- **The Good Life in Historic Buckhead**
  Thu., Oct. 23, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
  (Cost: $55 per person, includes lunch and transportation)

- **Atlanta's Famous Firsts; Coca-Cola & CNN**
  Fri. Oct. 24, 11:15 a.m.-3:45 p.m.
  (Cost: $55 per person, includes lunch, transportation, and donation to Hesch Scholarship Foundation)

FRI. OCT. 24

8 a.m.-5 p.m.—Registration
8 a.m.-1:30 p.m.—Seminars
10 a.m.-5 p.m.—Exhibits Open
11:15 a.m.-3:45 p.m.—Optional Tour
3 p.m.—Hesch Drawing
6 p.m.-11:30 p.m.—Awards Show & Banquet, Hyatt Regency

SAT. OCT. 25

8 a.m.-4 p.m.—Registration
8 a.m.-10 a.m.—Annual Business Meeting & Breakfast
8 a.m.-11:30 a.m.—Seminars
10 a.m.-4 p.m.—Exhibits Open
3:30 p.m.—Hesch Drawing

Note: For attendee convenience, all events take place in, or depart from, the Georgia World Congress Center unless otherwise specified.

First time: Trade-show-only pass available at $60 per person (non-member) when ordered by Sept. 19; on-site the pass is $75.

SEMINARS

THU., OCT. 24

8 a.m.-10 a.m.
- **Public PCs and Games of the Future**

Innovative plans for coin-op from Intel Corp., world-known computer chip producer.

10 a.m.-11 a.m.
- **Round Table: Redemption Tickets-to Redeem or Not to Redeem**

Owners/operators discuss game mixes, controls, and other aspects of this profitable growth area.

11 a.m.-Noon
- **The Pull-Tab Industry**

Interested in an additional profit center? Find out about opportunities in this new field.

12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m.
- **Round Table: Computer Software for the Business Office**

Computers can make life much easier in the front office, sales division, parts department, you name it. Learn about the latest offerings.

FRI. OCT. 24

8 a.m.-10 a.m.
- **The High-Tech Future of Commercial Video Games**

Remember the stir caused by Microsoft in '96? Company representatives are back with updates on developments.

11 a.m.-Noon
- **The Great Amusement Giveaway & Radio Advertising Program**

Operators, distributors, and manufacturers who have had success with the program explain the benefits and how it can work for you.

11 a.m.-Noon
- **Round Table: Revenue Enhancements**

AMOA MEMBER RECEPTION

Thu., Oct. 23
5 p.m.-7:30 p.m.
Georgia World Congress Center
Southern-style hospitality in food and entertainment that's free for all registered AMOA members and their families.

Explore successful ways to boost your bottom line, from tournaments and leagues to advertising and location commissions.

12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m.

- **Round Table: Employee Relations & Management Issues**

Shared experiences on hiring, firing, compensation, bonus incentives, and other management issues.

AWARDS SHOW & BANQUET

Fri., Oct. 24
6 p.m.-11:30 p.m.
Hyatt Regency Atlanta

End the suspense over the music, game, and Jukebox Legend Hall of Fame awards, then dance the night away.

Cost: $100 per person or $900 for a table of 10 when purchased in advance.

SAT. OCT. 25

10 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

- **The New Sound of Music: Jukeboxes in the Digital Age**

New technology looms on the horizon. Get an update and the benefit of expert opinions on the newest ways to deliver music.

10 a.m.-Noon and 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

(Four-hour session breaks for lunch)

- **36 Ways to Make Powerful Presentations**

Hands-on workshop that concentrates on the art of persuading listeners, polishing your image, and making a sales pitch.

10 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

- **Building Relationships with Locations**

Expectations and bottom lines are not the same for owner/operators and locations yet both depend on each other. Understanding and communication between the two is paramount to success.

10 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

- **The International Market for Amusement Equipment**

What's selling abroad? Manufacturers and distributors will gain valuable insights into the marketplace from a panel of international operators.

AMOA BUSINESS MEETING

Sat. Oct. 25
8 a.m.-10 a.m.
Georgia World Congress Center

On the agenda: committee reports, elections, and voting on infrastructure changes.

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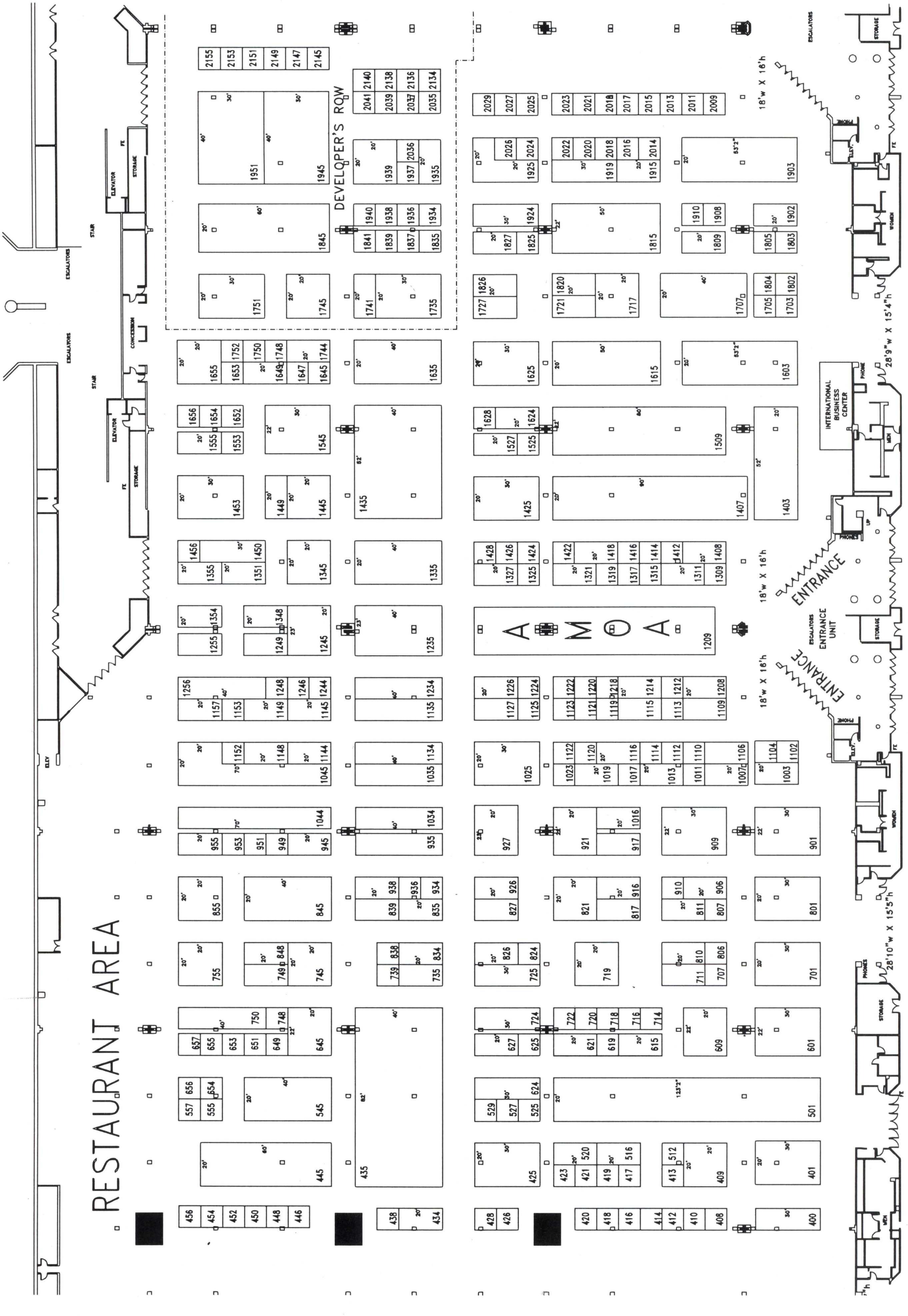
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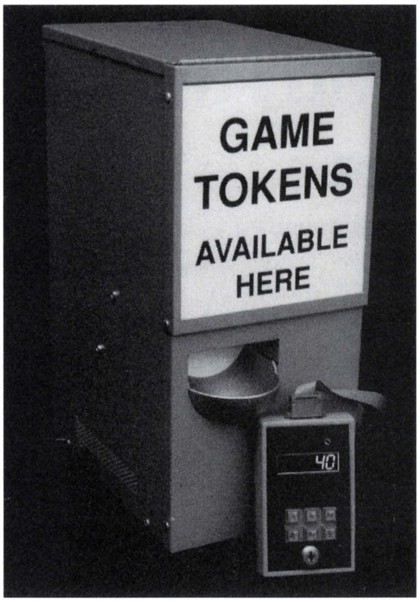

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What do you think of proposed changes in the AMOA structure?

Proposal in a nutshell:

1. Reduce the number of board members through attrition to four officers, nine regional directors, six at-large directors, and two immediate past presidents. (Down from the current 48 to 21 by the year 2000.)

2. Manufacturers and suppliers could hold up to six board positions.

3. Directors elected for three years.

4. Officers serve one-year terms; past presidents serve two years after their incumbency.

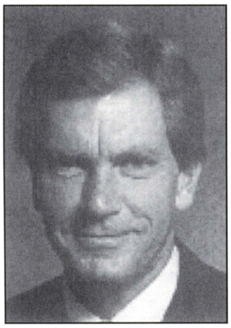
5. Reduce the nearly 50 committees, subcommittees, and ad-hoc committees to nine permanent standing committees: executive, finance, government relations, long-range planning, membership and marketing, state associations, trade show, education foundation, and technology.

6. Scale down the executive committee from 12 (four officers, three vice presidents, five past presidents) to seven (four officers, two past presidents, and one appointed by the directors).

7. Modify the association name to be the Amusement & Music Owners Association.

Leoma Ballard
(past AMOA president)
West Virginia Music & Vending Assn.
Belle, W.Va.

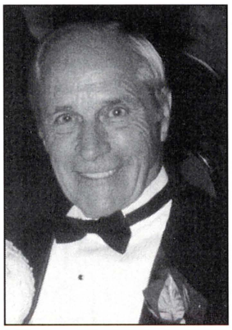
AMOA members really need to study the consequences. I think the proposal is making a big mistake by not representing the board geographically. Members need to understand what's going to happen and be there at AMOA International Expo '97 and cast their votes at the annual breakfast meeting (Oct. 25).



Jim Groeschl
Viking Vending/Lieberman Music Co.
Menomonee Falls, Wis.

I think it's all positive, an intelligent reaction. You have to react and do things. This is like using a sharpshooter approach instead of a rifle. All those participating (after the changes) will be more active and motivated to accomplish more. There is so much to be done in this industry. It's like running a business; there are a lot of things I would like to do but can't do all at one time. You have to prioritize. I feel AMOA is smart doing the same thing.

The concern I hear from people is that manufacturers will be running the association. They won't be in the majority and they will have to be voted upon. It would be a shame not to take advantage of the knowledge and capabilities of the people with the factories. Factories and distributors have an obligation to help their industry. I can't imagine anyone using their position for their own agenda—that being their foremost motivator. If everything is done with the good of the industry in mind, how can we lose?

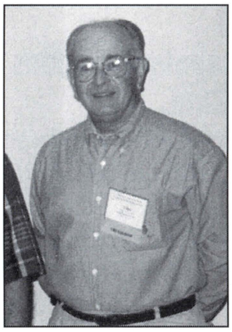


Howard Harkins
Howard Music Co.
Davenport, Iowa

As an association member since the early '60s I have mixed emotions. I feel the changes are necessary, especially from an economic point of view. And we need a more manageable amount of committees.

I have no problem with manufacturers on the board. Anyone on the board will have to be approved by the directors and be willing to work. I cannot see anyone going to the top unless it is a qualified person. When we (operators) go to association meetings our biggest competitors (other operators) are there and we deal with that. It has been proven over the years that it takes all three of us—operators, distributors, and manufacturers—for the industry to be successful. If we don't talk with each other we won't get anything resolved.

Regarding the name change, I think it is the greatest idea in the world. Back when the association name changed from MOA to AMOA people were concerned, yet we've gone along smoothly for many years. The last few years have been hard on all associations. The name change will improve our image plus it will reflect the broader scope of the board.



John Neville
Blackhawk Music Co.
Sterling, Ill.

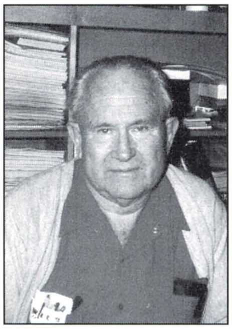
I think the changes will be positive in the long run. Obviously, the association is unwieldy the way it is. The reservations I have, and I do have some, concern being careful about who we have at the helm. The current slate of officers I'm sure will do right by the membership, but we have to make sure there is leadership that will take us in the right direction. Everything has its checks and balances; it's called elections!

We voted in term limits and as a new board member I guess I voted myself out of a job! But fewer board members will be positive. Right now it's nearly impossible to get anything done because there are too many people to contact. Can you even imagine getting together a conference call with all the directors? With a smaller, leaner leadership, the association will be able to make things happen quicker.

There are ways to cut costs and the association needs to do that wherever it can. For instance, the board members paying their own way to mid-year board meetings.

Another thing that is positive is cutting back on the number of committees. There was way too much duplication of effort with too many committees. Here's an example: Do you know the definition of a mule? It's a horse put together by a committee!

I know that AMOA made a commitment to NANI, and although I don't know that much about it, I feel it or something like it is the way of the future. If we don't have something new we might as well fold our tents and go away. Business can't continue as it has been whether it's our own businesses or the association.



Doug Minter
Tip Top Amusement Co.
Carson City, Nev.

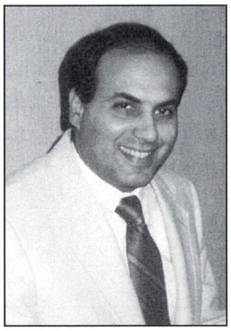
Taxation without representation is not fair! My opinion is that cutting back on board members without letting the general membership vote on it is illegal. But it should come to a vote in Atlanta at the show, and I don't know what the outcome will be.

I agree totally that AMOA must cut costs. The association got hopelessly over its head with Smith, Bucklin and it needs to cut costs with this management firm. AMOA was spending the money as fast as it was coming in and not saving for a rainy day. We are all businessmen and know that we could never run our businesses that way.

But back to cutting costs. There are many ways that AMOA could cut costs without cutting the number of board members. For instance, when I first got on the board, we were paid only a small pittance for being on the board during the board meetings. Then they voted to pay the first $100 per day for hotel rooms for the board members during the meeting. If there are 50 board members and the association is picking up the first $100 per day, that's a lot of money that shouldn't have to be spent. I don't know of any board members who are so hard up that they couldn't afford to pay their own expenses.

But that brings up another issue. They plan the board meetings in the most expensive places they can find. There are a lot of nice places they could hold a board meeting and cut costs. Cutting costs in areas like this is doable, while not cutting back on representation.

As far as cutting back on the committees, some are really superfluous, but there are some that should not be eliminated. That would have to be up to the board. I know that AMOA bit off a lot when it committed to NANI, but I don't know that much about it. I will say that I don't think those involved have done their job to inform operators about it. For example, I don't even think I can use it in Nevada because of legal problems. They need to find out which states will be affected legally if it is ever up and running.



Phil Elum
Elum Music Co.
Massillon, Ohio

I think what's going on within AMOA is fantastic. It was time for change. All of us have seen changes in our own businesses and there is no reason AMOA should not change its structure to meet economic and administrative issues confronting the association. The changes are not being made on a whim, they are necessary. I give all the credit in the world to the AMOA board that is steering the association in a new direction.

Yes, there has been some controversy over the proposals, but usually that controversy focuses on making any changes at all. It is just not easy to make any kind of change whether it's in our businesses or our association. But the executive board recognizes that we simply don't have a whole lot of choice.

You asked me what I'd say to someone about why they should support AMOA. That's easy. AMOA is tackling some issues that will have a major impact on all of us. Cigarette vending is one example. We don't know the outcome, and it probably won't be pleasant, but as a large cigarette vendor I'm pleased at what AMOA has done. I don't think the association could do any more than it has without raising more money. Terry Davis of TD Rowe in Houston, Texas, has been instrumental in the cigarette vending fight. Thank God we have him. He is a real presence in cigarette vending.

Another thing AMOA has been working on is the dollar coin, which is going to be a hot topic. While we don't know how that will turn out, the federal government will soon have to make a critical decision that it didn't have to make before. There is a depletion of Susan B. Anthony dollars and the U.S. Mint will either have to make the same coin and the same mistake again or make a new coin that doesn't look like a quarter. I think there are enough Susan Bs for about another 18 months or so, so there should be some activity on this soon. There's also the fact that no one wants to lose the dollar bill, but it will have to go before any dollar coin is accepted. It's a case of people not wanting changes made even if those changes will be positive in the long run.

Why should you join the AMOA? Because if you own a business in the coin machine industry you have a vested interest in what happens. Anything you can do on your own, AMOA can do on a large scale, such as lobbying.

It's easy to make excuses, we could do it all day long. But anyone serious about their business will find benefits in joining a group of people who have the same concerns. I get angry when someone says they can't join because it costs too much. It doesn't. I find that it's the smaller operators who complain the most. It's funny, though, that they can nearly pay their dues in the savings when they attend the AMOA convention because of the membership benefits.

We're looking forward to a streamlined AMOA. It will absolutely get done. We will depend on AMOA members to serve on committees. The board is going to hope and ask all the members to get involved in committees. All you have to do is call and say you want to volunteer for a committee that is important to you. It's that simple.

AMOA is not making any promises, but it is in the midst of change that seems positive.

Gene Winstead
American Amusement Arcades
Minneapolis, Minn.

There is a strong case for these changes. Overall, with the consolidation of the route industry, the proposed changes do reflect the current trends in the market. Like any association it will boil down to the quality of members on the board, that will still be the key. Directors will still have to be active and dig into the work.

Trimming back the past presidents' duties is a good idea due to the fact that from start to finish, if you move up to president, it's a 15-year commitment. That's a lot to ask of anybody for a volunteer position.

I liked the idea of changing the association name back when past president R.A. Green III first suggested it years ago. It makes sense; it's a better description, more appropriate.

As far as the committees are concerned, when you start putting up that many committees there is a tendency to rely heavily on staff. In lean times you have to be cognizant of your staff and prioritize the work the association has to do. ▲

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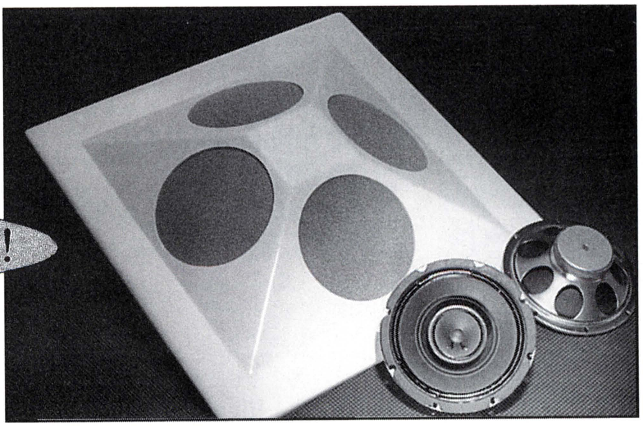

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GUEST
COMMENTARY

Last month we did an extensive interview with an operator who later decided he did not want his name used. However, we thought he had such interesting things to say, we decided to run it (with his permission) with no name attached. It could have been the operator next door or one in the next state. Either way, it gave everyone food for thought. Glenn Anderson from Hawaii has served faithfully on the AMOA board, pulling perhaps more than his own weight. He feels strongly that the association is more than it is perceived to be. We thank him for his words.

An AMOA board member offers his opinion and support

I would like to express a different view than I saw in your August 1997 article "A Street Operator Offers His Brutally Honest Opinions." In particular I would like to respond to the section regarding the AMOA.

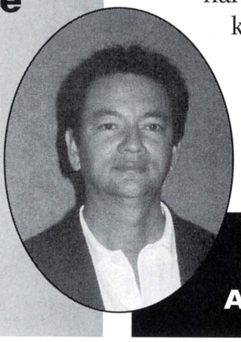
First, as an AMOA board member I appreciate the feedback from an operator. Perceptions of the AMOA are as mysterious as the AMOA itself.

This operator perceives that there are some large operators who use politics to stomp their way to the top of AMOA. I have not found this to be true. The members who make it to the top have helped others before them, who in turn support them. They are noted for their contributions of ideas and legwork at AMOA meetings.

This is all volunteer work and the board members cover almost all of their own expenses including travel costs. (High ranking officers are covered, but this is after several years of paying their own way.)

The personal cost of serving AMOA intensifies at the officer level, and increases as one approaches the presidency. It would amaze this street operator to know how much time these individuals spend on association business. Most of them completely turn over their businesses to managers during their year of presidency. Not all board members have the resources to do this, which is why such a high percentage of officers are from large companies.

I like AMOA and enjoy working with the other board members. I am still trying to figure out how to work hard for the association, and get kicked off so I want have to spend a year zigzagging across the United States handling industry crises! I don't particularly want to visit Chicago during the winter or end up in the U. S. Congress testifying on video violence or tobacco vending machines.



Glenn Anderson
Microworlds
Aiea, Hawaii

This street operator asked, "When did AMOA give up being the operators' association and become a giant political blob going absolutely nowhere?" He may have a point. There are about 48 committees trying to cover all members' interests. This has grown heavy indeed for the board members to keep track of. The AMOA is now trying to downsize to become more focused by reducing the number of committees and board members.

Here's my view of the AMOA. There are the 1,600 companies that support it with their membership. There are thousands of others who do not. There is the trade show which is a fund raiser to get the money for association costs, services, and political lobbying. There is Smith, Bucklin, a professional association management company, which provides the administrative staff to run the day-to-day operations and run the trade show.

There are the board members and other volunteers. They are coin-op businessmen representing different types and sizes of operations. They are really hooked on the industry, willing to do whatever they can to save it. They try to set aside some time during their hectic days to do association work. They are aware of what others before them have done, and they want to take their turn to give something back.

I hope this street operator will someday have good things to say about AMOA. That AMOA will be able to focus on issues and services to help improve the business of all operators. That all operators will be involved in the process of AMOA. That they will all understand how AMOA works and be able to help make our industry better for us all. That operators cannot give up on AMOA. This is our association. ▲

OFF
THE RECORD

THE TRUTH about trade shows

Forget the truth serum, industry members freely give their opinions on the value and the scheduling of major events.

Since it's autumn conversations naturally come around to the string of trade shows that crowd both the international and domestic calendars. No matter who you talk to, or what main topic was the focus of the call, trade show references creep in: "Are you going to be at (AMOA, IAAPA, ATEI)?" "What have you heard about it?" "Will it be bigger or smaller than last year?" "Maybe we can get together at the show."

As usual, most of the best comments are off the record. And hardly anyone is without an opinion on particular shows or the number of shows. Here is a sample of recent remarks from all segments of the industry:

"We've decided not to exhibit at any more shows this year after ASI in the spring. It's just not cost-effective for the people and products we must bring plus the booth. If you don't have a brand-new game people pass by, see what you have, but they don't try it. The industry is changing and shows have to change. Instead of working together, shows are fighting with each other. We need bigger and better shows, maybe then the attendance will be up."
(Manufacturer)

"No show in the continental United States has been all things to all people. There has been a failure to identify customers, an effort to get everybody at all the shows, and it's not working. The AMOA show turns out the largest number of street operators, but video is not their primary product. IAAPA puts on the biggest show, but there is nothing there for the route operator. The guy driving to a show from rural America is checking out things like truck lift gates.

"The offshore video manufacturers have had a niche in the big FECs and arcade chains. Software-driven video product is just another product line to street operators who have darts, pool, and jukeboxes. Since route operators are not buying as much video that does not mean they are not good customers. The big manufacturers don't like hearing what is the reality of the business. They forget they keep obsoleting us and leave us holding the bag." *(Operator)*

"From the standpoint of a small company it's too difficult to have more than one key employee gone at a time. The time frame is so tight because from mid- to late September and early October we are starting leagues and no one can be gone at that point. We need all guns on the firing line during this period. What these shows are asking us to do is to support them in membership and attendance, and the timing is very much off. There isn't anything coming out that would be a revelation. For a lot of operators, going to a show is their yearly vacation, more than people realize, because it's the only time they get a chance to get away." (Operator)

"We don't need three fall shows. Personally, I'm going to the AMOA show. Fun Expo is for new locations that want to see what's out so they can talk it over with their operator, or they want to buy their own equipment. AMOA needs to open up the show to make it easier for locations to come and see the new machines.

"It seems like some of the manufacturers are really pushing for the IAAPA show. I'm going to AMOA but I'm not planning to go to IAAPA one month later. Attending shows is very expensive. You only need to go to one of them, not all three."
(Distributor)

OFF
THE RECORD

"IAAPA is a good show because we expose ourselves to a tremendous amount of foreign business. Most trade shows are more looking and seeing but not so much buying. Foreigners come more ready to buy than anyone else." (Manufacturer)

"Las Vegas is the place to have a show—any show. There is something for everybody in Las Vegas. Orlando is geared more for young people. AMOA's 1996 survey indicated that operators like to go to Las Vegas; it's easy to get in and out." ***(Distributor)***

"It's more of a negative to not be at a show than it is a positive to be there. In other words, you have to create a presence in the industry. People who come to the show should come with buying product in mind. It's not a matter of the quality of the shows.

"Most of the attendees figure it to be a mini vacation they can write off and not so much a business trip. Their greatest fear is what their competitors are doing rather than looking at what they can do to get a leg up on their competitors. It's a defensive move instead of an offensive move. The mode is more to stay the other guy off and only do the minimum to keep their locations intact." *(Manufacturer)*

"To be honest, our company does not attend shows. We prefer to go to our distributor open houses for game follow-up. We have a good relationship with our local distributors. They do not mislead us; they are fair and up front. I won't kid you, I would like to go to some of the seminars at the shows because I feel they are beneficial. I think the seminars are more important than the equipment. Our company concentrates on leagues and countertops, which have been lifesavers." (Operator)

"We need a spring show for distributors set up with small booths in a ballroom—an informal event. Then distributors could have open houses and let their customers know what's coming out. Operators can't go to all these shows either.

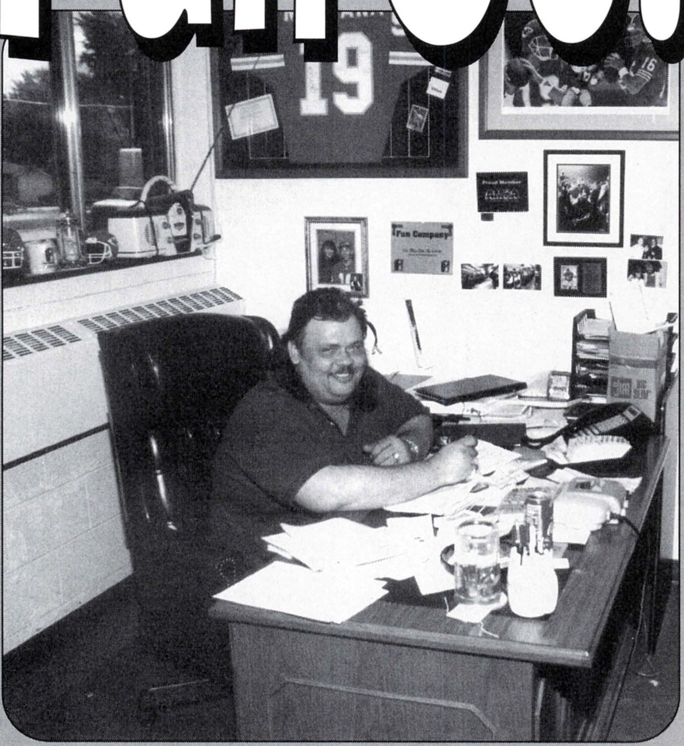
More and more of the operators I talk to say, 'You go and come back and tell me what you think is good.' When you go to a show there is so much hype, and games are so complicated, it's hard to tell what's going to be good or not. Operators need to depend more on distributors to test a machine first and go on what the distributor feels will be successful.

"This is a bit off the subject, but certain manufacturers need to do research and check out game legalities before they release machines for sale in the United States. We need clarification on what's legal and what's not. Some of the skill-stop type games are real questionable." ***(Distributor)***

"The street operator is best served by the AMOA show. I always look forward to AMOA; other shows are secondary. IAAPA is interesting but really has no relation to my daily life. Three shows so close together—Fun Expo, AMOA, IAAPA—that's nuts! From the manufacturing point of view it's costly and takes over one week away from the office. From the distributing side I wouldn't mind going to Fun Expo because it's geared to FECs, but I am going to see the same stuff at AMOA with more exhibits geared to the street operator.

"I miss those distributor hours. If there is something hot on the floor and I want to play it I don't have time to wait. The distributor has to step up to the plate first and be pretty comfortable with what he has seen. It might be more beneficial to have distributor hours at the end of the show. Let us stay longer and take the time to look over the equipment." ***(Distributor)***

Fun Co. meets DEMAND for quality CABINETS



Clayton McGonigle, president

Experienced route operators Clayton M. Gonigle and Randy Fenwick of New Lisbon, Wis., decided to step away from the amusement business three years ago when they sold their route, but before long they were entering a new venture to fill a niche by supplying quality game cabinets.

Today, McGonigle serves as president and Fenwick as vice president of the growing firm of Fun Co. Ltd. that specializes in all types of cabinets (countertop, upright, deluxe multiplayer, sit-down, crane) and has a staff of 28 employees.

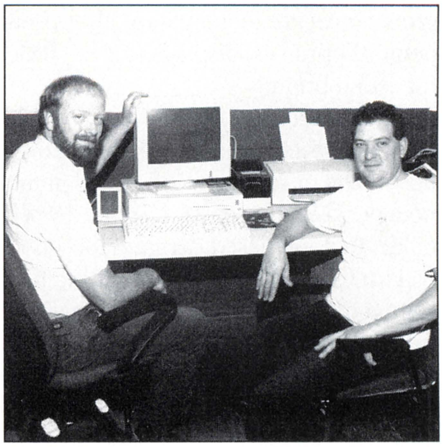
Fun Co. has been in the same location since its beginning, continually enlarging to its current 10,000-square-foot facility. Now the company is primed to move up again with the addition of another 6,000 square feet to accommodate its growing design and engineering department, factory production, technical shop, shipping and handling, and administrative offices.

According to McGonigle, Fun Co. sales have doubled in the last year and are projected to double again in 1998. He attributes this rapid success to the convenience features and quality materials used in their products.

Those features include the use of tempered

In Accounting, (standing): Colleen Pingel (l) and Jean Cook (r); (seated): Liz Walker.

Sandy Murray, controller



Bob "BobKat" Stremcha (l) of Design/Engineering and Keith Hillriegel of Purchasing/-Shipping/Receiving.

glass instead of Plexiglas, because, as McGonigle says, "It's easier to keep clean. Plexiglas scratches and gets smoky. Everyone knows that a clean game is played more than a dirty game."

Years in route operations meant McGonigle and Fenwick knew what operators wanted and needed in cabinets to ensure they could hold up well on location. The most popular model is the ES-25 25-inch upright. The universal video cabinet can accommodate any type of game, from a gun game to a golf game, games with joysticks, and those with trackballs. Said McGonigle, "What operators like about it is that we made it as operator-friendly as possible."

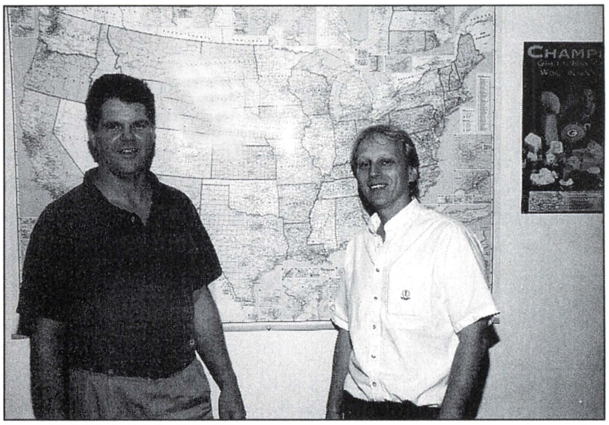
On the ES-25 a bracket holds the monitor in such a way that it's quick and easy to move to a vertical- or horizontal- mount position. The control panel door slides out and folds down for easy access to the buttons and joysticks.

"We started small, he says, "building a few cabinets for a few customers. We put a lot of thought into marketing our product at a fair price. The cabinets really sell themselves."

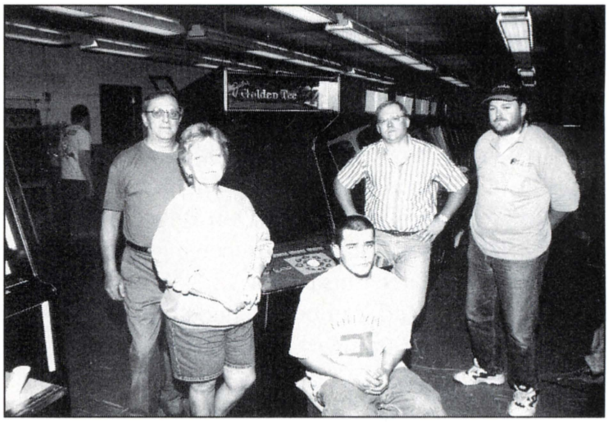
The first cabinets produced were for 8-line and poker machines, then came the ES-25 and the 33-inch Showcase. Soon countertop and crane cabinet designs were on the drawing board. In addition to its base product line, Fun Co. does contract manufacturing for both the arcade and gaming industries.

McGonigle explains that in working with customers who come in with their own specifications, he points out from a former operator's standpoint what is good and not good. "They realize I know what I'm talking about," says McGonigle. "They are thinking of selling a cabinet that looks good but they are not thinking about possible breakdowns. Anything mechanical will break down sooner or later."

Most Fun Co. cabinets are made of thermally-fused Melamine. The Melamine of today is not susceptible to marring or scratching. General manager Don Teske says that although the company does not do much metal work, it plans to expand into that area in the future: "As we are



MELAFACE
MELAFACE



FROM TOP: Dave Linsmeyer (l), sales, and Don Teske, general manager.

Production Shop, (back row, l-r): Sam Ball, Adam Madison, Jason Hofmeister, Chris Pelger, Don Pelger, John Pelger, and Greg Bliss; (front row, l-r): Mike Owen, John Klardie, and Joe Buerkle. (Damion Gundlach is not pictured.)

The Electronics/Assembly crew by the ES-25 cabinets with *Golden Tee '97* kits installed, (standing, l-r): Joe Pryzbylo, Betty Faber, Steve Elsing, and Tom Isaacson; (seated) Shane McGonigle.

growing we are looking into other products. We've had requests for point-of-purchase displays such as brochure stands and display cases for redemption."

Why is the cabinet business flourishing? Says McGonigle: "The best thing that could have happened for the cabinet business right now is the introduction of a good game." He cites Incredible Technologies' *Golden Tee 3D Golf* and *World Class Bowling* as examples of kits that increased demand for good cabinets.

Fun Co. has done a lot of kitting for distributors. "Kits have changed," says McGonigle. "If you put them in a cabinet that's not suited to the game you can run into a lot of problems. It costs money for new cabinets but you have to update to present the product in the best light for playability. He who updates the most has the most quality locations."

McGonigle relates this story: "We've literally called distributors and shipped cabinets to them at our expense. We've told them if they didn't like the cabinet they could ship it back at their expense and tell us why they were not satisfied. Well, we've never got a cabinet back yet. That speaks for itself."

As a growing company supplying hardware, what does Fun Co. think of the developments with the National Amusement Network Inc. (NANI) and the Microsoft proposals? Teske says if a manufacturer comes in and wants a cabinet built to NANI standards it will be done. "As a contract manufacturer we are able to build for anyone," he adds. "We want to remain neutral on the NANI issue so we can help all the people rather than locking ourselves into only building for this group or that group.

"We want to stay on the side of the operators and distributors and make things easy and feasible for them. We are not trying to grow too fast. We believe in measured growth. We choose not to take tons of orders we can't fill. If we take any order we make sure it fits within our realm of capability. We keep our promises."

An example of this concern led to the design of Fun Co.'s pedestal base for countertops, which saves a lot of operators from having to buy an upright. "Basically," says Teske, "they can convert a countertop into a stand-up game."

In addition to the new pedestal, Fun Co. also distributes many of the 8-line and poker games including the Reel 'N Quake 8-line game, Wells-Gardner monitors, and is Midwest distributor for Pentranic monitors.

A dedicated staff stands behind all Fun Co. products. Joining McGonigle, Newman, and Teske are:

Accounting–Sandy Murray (controller), Jean Cook, Colleen Pingel, and Liz Walker.

Design/Engineering–Bob Stremcha.

Drivers–Lori Forsythe and Steve Forsythe.

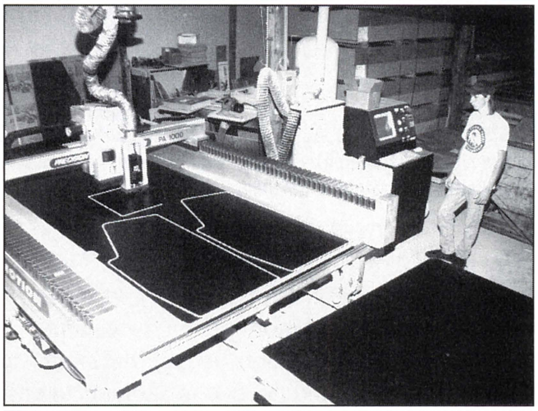
Electronics/Assembly–Steve Elsing (manager), Betty Faber, Tom Isaacson, Shane McGonigle, and Joe Pryzbylo.

Production Shop–Sam Ball (foreman), Greg Bliss, Joe Buerkle, Damion Gundlach, Jason Hofmeister, John Klardie, Adam Madison, Mike Owen, Chris Pelger, Don Pelger, and John Pelger.

Purchasing/Shipping/Receiving–Keith Hillriegel.

Sales–Dave Linsmeyer.

Fun Co. Ltd. can be reached at (800)808-5554; fax (608)562-5913; e-mail (Funco@mwt.net). ▲



FROM TOP: Two styles of countertop 8-lines in progress.

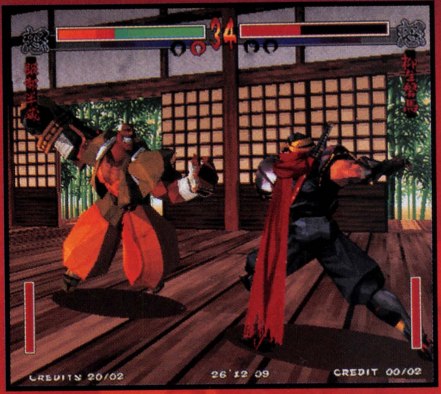
Jason Hofmeister by the precision CNC Router that cuts cabinet parts with speed and accuracy.

Trucks at the loading dock are driven by Lori Forsythe and Steve Forsythe.

Fun Co. Ltd. headquarters in New Lisbon, Wis.

SNK®

SAMURAI SHODOWN 64



Samurai Shodown 64 is THE 3-D fighting game that unfolds like a movie.

Punch, slash, run! Crash through the walls and into the next room! Fall through floors into hidden levels!

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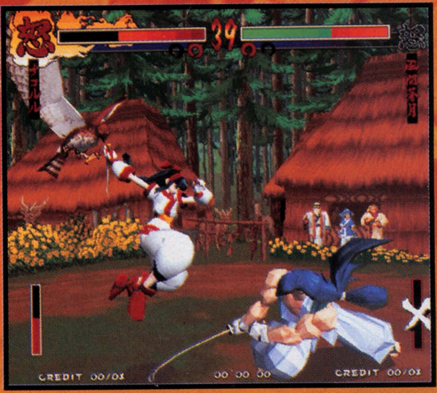

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PRODUCT
INTRODUCTION

The new team and new product at SNK

SNK has something new, something that will impress you. Make that two things the company is excited about: the Hyper Neo Geo 64 and the new team that will be marketing it.

SNK has put together a group of people who know their way around the industry. John Barone, his wife Susan Jarocki, Tim Jackson, and Daryl Williams are poised to deliver to the industry the long-awaited and anticipated Hyper Neo Geo 64. However, all make a point to include a wide array of other products SNK will be introducing. Other team members include regional sales manager Jeff Yantz, president Yoshikazu Jinno and Mitsuhiro Tanaka.

The team agreed that the enthusiasm comes from the top. Mr. Kawasaki knows what's going on and is out to give the American market just what it needs. An example is taking several key distributors on a trip to Japan. While proudly unveiling the Hyper Neo Geo 64 and after the discussions these men had with SNK Japan, the company felt it had gained valuable input.

Let's take a look at this new team at SNK. John Barone entered the industry in the early '80s with Exidy, then moved to Data East, then to SNK in 1987 where he led the sales and marketing team in launching the original Neo Geo system. In 1993, along with Susan he joined Sega Gaming and now has returned to SNK as executive vice president. "I'm back with a vengeance," John chuckled. "This company is so strong and is focusing on such tremendous product, I'm elated and proud to be here."

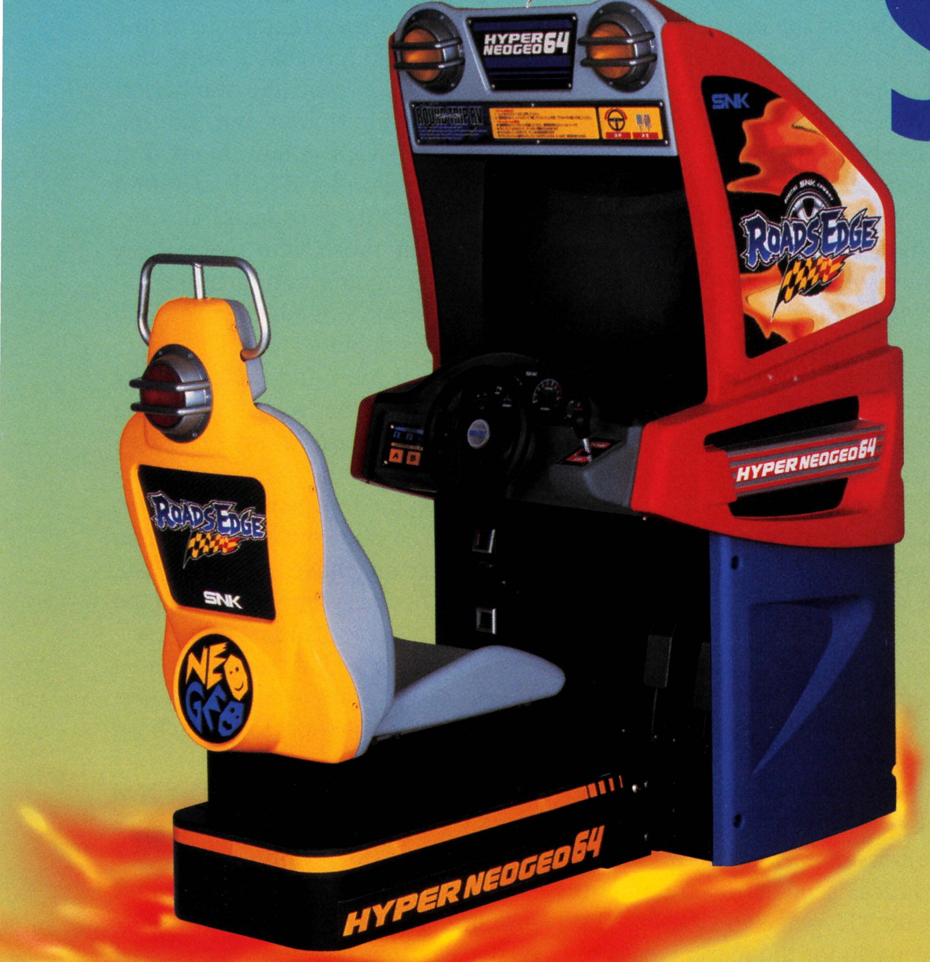
Susan Jarocki (Barone) literally grew up in the business. Her father Stan Jarocki was at Bally for many years and her brother Jim followed in their father's footsteps. Susan began her industry career in manufacturing at Data East, then in 1987 moved to SNK until she and John moved to Las Vegas with Sega Gaming. Now she has returned as SNK's general manager. She'll be focusing on production and marketing. "Once again, we will all be wearing a lot of different hats," she said. "We've got great product and a strong team to promote it."

Tim Jackson is one of the industry's favorites. He's got more energy than any one person should have, but that's exactly what makes him so vital to SNK's new team and new product. Ironically, Tim got into the industry with SNK in the early 1980s, although it wasn't the same SNK we know today. That SNK became Romstar, which became Gamestar, which became Capcom. Through it all Tim remained at his post. "As Susan said, we all wear a lot of hats, but we've all done that before. I think that's where the comradery comes into play. 'One for all and all for one.' We all know that you can't expect to market product if you don't have a dedicated team that can work together," Tim said.

DIGITAL SNK COWBOY

ROADS EDGE

SNK takes you 4 wheelin' on the all new Hyper Neo Geo 64 coin-op system.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Choose from a variety of sports utility vehicles challenging the rugged terrain throughout the world.

"Roads Edge" is designed with a convenient removable rom cassette format for simple and easy convertibility to SNK's future driving sensations.

- Linkable up to 4 units
- 64 bit graphics
- CD quality sound
- Expandable hardware system
- Vehicle motion simulation
- Reactive Steering

Specifications (assembled)
Single sit-down custom cabinet
Height : 70"
Width : 31"
Depth : 66"
Weight : 500lbs

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Daryl Williams has been in the industry since the early 1980s, basically following the same path as Tim, beginning at SNK, Romstar, Gamestar, Capcom, and now SNK. Daryl will be heading up the technical department, a job he's perfect for. "I've just recently joined this illustrious team at SNK and will be putting my years of experience to work," he said.

THE PRODUCT

SNK has made a major commitment and will have plenty of software for the Hyper Neo Geo 64 as well as continue to develop new software for the original Neo Geo. The first titles for Hyper Neo Geo 64 will be *Road's Edge,* an actual sit-down, off-road driving simulator, and *Samurai Shodown 64.*

Hyper Neo Geo 64 will be available in a number of configurations. The three cabinet styles are a custom upright cabinet, a gun game cabinet, and a driving cabinet. John picked up the description of the product, "We will introduce a series of software for each of these cabinets. Given the option, we feel operators would prefer investing in custom cabinets (drivers, guns, etc.) when multiple games will be offered for each. If you invest in other custom gun- or simulator-type games, that's all you get. However, SNK is going to bring the very same quality to the system whereby you make the investment in the cabinet, then you can continue to update and change the games in that cabinet. We have already committed to eight titles within the first year."

Tim was quick to add that although eight titles in the first year for the Hyper Neo Geo 64 is certainly impressive, there will also be eight new titles released during this time period for the original Neo Geo. Tim detailed, "I'm sure there will come a day when we stop making titles for the Neo Geo, but that's not in the near future. In the United States alone there are over 70,000 Neo Geo systems. Some of them are being taken out of the A locations but they're still making money in the B and C locations."

John added, "As long as our original Neo Geo software continues to provide entertainment value and operators can make money, we'll continue to support it."

He continued, "I think operators are going to feel very good about what we're bringing to the market. We've done something that no other manufacturer has done by bringing all the quality of high-tech entertainment that the majors have sold, as a system where operators will get more bang for their buck. Operators who may have been unable to afford such high-tech entertainment for their locations may now be able to do so."

However, SNK is about more than Hyper Neo Geo 64, as Tim keeps mentioning, "One of the biggest successes will be our ability to be diversified. We won't be only concentrating on video games. We will have an impressive repertoire of entertaining products. We look at the industry with a panoramic view. We'll have a whole array of products."

It's interesting to note that with companies sometimes looking at ways to market product directly to operators, the one company that would seem to have all the elements to make that possible is adamant that it will not even consider it. "There is much more to a distributor than simply selling product," Tim declared. "They give valuable advice, offer financing, and, don't forget the service."

John added, "When you think of SNK having 70,000 systems out there, we certainly could have pulled off selling direct. But we chose not to. We don't believe that is the way to best serve the industry. It boils down to the fact that we believe in the distributor network."

Operators are always interested in the technical aspects of equipment. Daryl said, "Hyper Neo Geo 64 is a good scenario for the market, easy to install, easy to use, with the advantages of a high-end system but with interchangeable cartridges, and it's a high-tech system that is operator-friendly. I expect this system to be very well received. SNK will take the technology it's created and give operators something they'll be able to put on their routes and see a solid return on their investment."

If all this enthusiasm and lofty goals seems a little unrealistic, you haven't heard about the research and development side of SNK. If you visit SNK's research and development facility in Japan, you'll see a six-story building of nothing but development. In the United States there's SNK Technology which will house over 30 engineers working on development for the U.S. market. In other words, there are quite a few people working to put SNK's commitment on the line.

John and Susan were with SNK when the company introduced the Neo Geo system in the late 1980s, which went on to make a tremendous mark on the industry. Operators, although perhaps not quite as receptive to the idea of a system game as the company would have liked, were soon won over when even the staunchest skeptics couldn't help but be impressed by SNK's commitment. But you have to wonder if SNK can do it again. Who better to address that speculation than those who were there then and are going to be leading the team once again when Hyper Neo Geo 64 makes its debut.

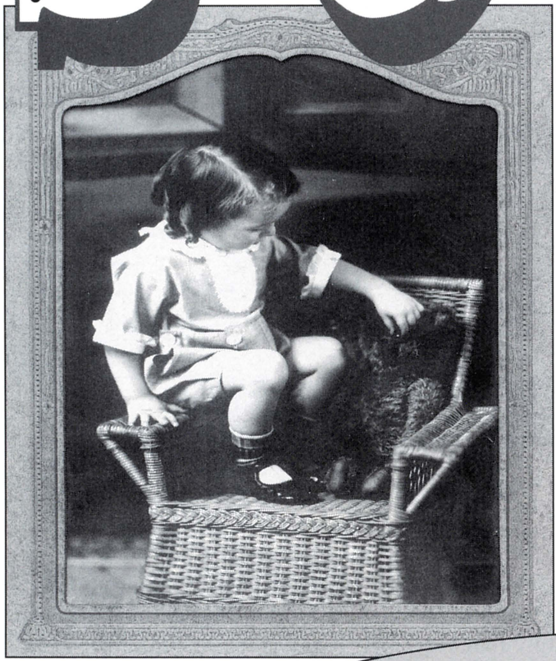
We asked John and Susan if they thought Hyper Neo Geo 64 was going to be easier for the industry to embrace because of the impressive history or would the footsteps be too big to fill. "Neo Geo came out at a time when the industry may have been a bit disillusioned about a system because of the failure of others to support their systems. But it worked, it made operators money, and perhaps even made it possible for some operators to stay in business," John stated.

But will introducing the Hyper Neo Geo 64 be easier or harder? "There's no right answer," John said. "We demonstrated to the market that SNK supports the system concept. In fact, no one has done it better. We have that track record which will help pave the way. However, the state of the industry is not what it was 10 years ago. Our new system utilizes the latest technology and will be a little more pricy."

Susan added, "It's always difficult to follow a winner even when you know you have another winner. Operators only want to know that their investment will be sound and they'll see a healthy return on investment. Those are promises that SNK can make and better yet, can keep." ▲

CENTURY CLUB INTERVIEW

BOB NIMS



Bob Nims of A.M.A. Distributors/Lucky Coin in New Orleans, La., has been in the coin machine business since he was a teenager, as he'll tell you in his story. Also being in the New Orleans area gave me a rare opportunity to spend a few hours in his office, gazing through the many photo albums brimming with pictures and newspaper clippings he's saved over these many years. It was a thrill watching the layers of the coin-op industry peel away, revealing those early days when men like Bob Nims were paving the way for the rest of us.

VALERIE COGNEVICH

There are some familiar faces in this AMOA board photo. Bob is way in the back to the left.

During our interview I asked Bob to name some of those who influenced him in his career, and he did. But I realized that if someone asked me the same question, I'd have to name Bob as one of those on my list. Thanks, Bob, for spending the time sharing your valuable memories with a fellow New Orleanian who, in turn, can share it with others who take this business very seriously.

How did you get into this business?

❝ My dad was in the restaurant business in Spokane, Wash., where I was born. I was the baby of five children. My parents divorced when I was two. Because my two older sisters, Ethel and Betty, and my brother Wally had won many awards in Spokane for their dancing and musical talents, my mother decided they should be in the entertainment business. She packed us all up and we moved to Beverly Hills, Calif. They weren't in the movies, but my sisters went on the Orpheum circuit and became well-known as the Nims twins, although they weren't really twins. My brother Wally was a great musician.

I graduated from high school just six months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, so I joined the Merchant Marines. I got off a ship near New Orleans where my youngest sister Verna lived. Her husband was in the Navy and gone quite a bit; she was very lonely. In the Merchant Marines you can stay on the beach for six months before shipping out so I decided to stay with Verna for awhile. I got a job at A.M. Amusement Co. cleaning jukeboxes, changing records, and typing title strips. I was surprised at how much I really enjoyed it. ❞

Didn't you have to go back out to sea at some point?

❝ Yes, I did. But when I quit going to sea, I called Andrew Monte at A.M. Amusement and asked him if he wanted me to come back to work for him. He said he did, so I told him I didn't have the money to get there and asked him if he would wire me $200! He sure did! I got on the Southern Pacific Sunset Limited and boogied down to New Orleans. I've been here ever since. ❞

Here's Bob (l) about the time he started in the coin-op industry when he was 17.

Did you eventually buy that company or did you start your own?

“ Monte sold his jukebox route to Dan Cohen, who owned Crescent Cigarette Service. I stayed with him, but I was looking for something else. I asked Dan if he'd mind if I put out some pinball machines on my own. When he sold the business to TAC Amusement Co. I had about 20 pinball machines out and my own company called Lucky Coin. I offered to stay with TAC until they didn't need me anymore, which turned out to be about six months later. Then I could spend all my time working my own route. ”

So basically you were on your own from that time on?

“ Yes, although I did other things at that time. For instance, I played music, piano and accordion, in the French Quarter on the weekends. I made extra money doing that so the money I made on the route could be put back into it. That's what they call pyramiding. Then I started buying other small routes. ”

How long did you operate only Lucky Coin before becoming a distributor?

“ I became a Rock-Ola distributor in 1956 and started American Music and Amusement (A.M.A.) Distributors. I was operating jukeboxes for about eight years before I became a distributor. Seeburg was the king of jukeboxes at the time because they got a head start on all the other manufacturers when in 1952 they came out with a 45 rpm player. Seeburg also added a 100-selection player that played both sides of the record. It was revolutionary. ”

How much different was operating 45 rpm records?

“ It was a major transition, but as you know, everything would eventually go to 45s. What we did during that transition was go from five-cent/six for a quarter play to 10-cent/three for a quarter play. There was a big push by some operators, especially me, to raise the price per play. It was much harder doing that than it was going to three plays for $1/seven for $2 with CDs.

The reason it was so hard was that everyone was so used to the nickel play Nickelodeons. Although jukeboxes took quarters, no one ever put a quarter in. It was a major transition.

When I became a Rock-Ola distributor, the company had come out with a competitive 45 rpm jukebox. By the '70s it was even more competitive. When the early '70s hit Rock-Ola had taken the top spot from Seeburg. ”

Was it easier to keep inventory with 45s?

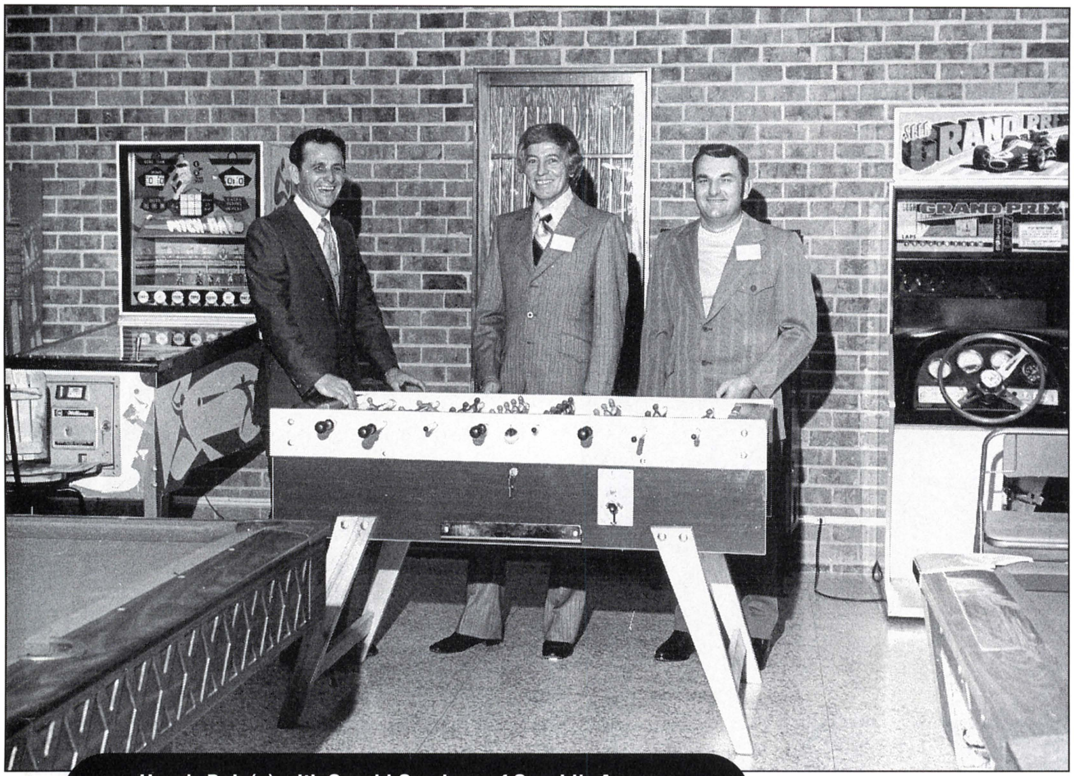
“ Much easier. However, I kept my 78s around a long time simply because I had a lot of jukeboxes out. No one pulled all the 78s off the route at one time. Cost wise, 45s were a little more, but it was a better product. A 78 was not quite as big as an LP but it only had one song on each side. It was a record that wore out very easily. When they went to the 45, the seven-inch vinyl record was more durable. It just lasted and lasted. You got more bang for your buck. The old plastic 78s broke very easily. In fact, a 78 record only lasted about three weeks of good play. ”

Do you remember the first Rock-Ola jukebox you distributed?

“ I sure do. It was Model 1456. It was a really good working jukebox. When operators had locations far away they used it because it didn't break down. It had a basket selection system that went to the end to select one side and the other way to select the other side. I think the design of the jukebox has always had to be in conformity to the mechanism. Back then they used physically bigger components that had to fit inside. Take an amplifier with bulky tubes which were quite a bit different than today's smaller, computer-driven amplifiers. So the older models were bigger. Then you had those big 78s that needed a bigger jukebox. ”

Who did you deal with at Rock-Ola?

“ Mr. Rockola and his sons Donald and David were there, but I didn't deal with them on a day-to-day basis. Ed Doris was the gentleman I dealt with. He was the executive vice president. He went with Rock-Ola about the same time I did. He previously worked in the air conditioning business with a company called Fedders, which became an



Here's Bob (c) with Gerald Goudeau of Gerald's Amusements (l) and Donald Barbin of Barbin Amusements.

air conditioning giant after World War II. He was a very good marketing guy and I enjoyed working with him. ”

Was it a different situation with the manufacturer than it is now?

“ It certainly was. The industry was young, and everyone was enjoying the growth. Companies like United Mfg.. made pinballs and eventually made a jukebox. They did business with you one-on-one. It was more of a family-oriented feeling. I went to the first AMOA, of course it was called MOA then, in 1948 at I think the Sherman Hotel in Chicago. All the manufacturers were there and they were so nice. Here I was a young kid, only 23, and it was the first MOA show, and I have never forgotten how well I was accepted and treated by my peers and elders. ”

Do you remember some of the equipment you saw?

“ Of course it was pinballs and jukeboxes. There were no bingo pinballs yet. The ones back in 1948 were the type where you'd shoot the ball and it would come out and hit some little targets. There were no flippers, they were very simple games. But they were interesting for the time. ”

Who did you buy your games from?

“ Early on I bought from Taft Odder in New Orleans. I bought from him because he gave me credit! I also bought from a man named Pete Nastasti, who had a little distributing company on Poydras Street. Back then the distributing companies in this area were all within a few blocks of each other.

The biggest problem was that financing was hard to come by. My major goal was credit. I'd pay a few dollars more for the product if I could get credit. ”

Before you could preview new products at an MOA show, how did you hear about new games?

“ Before there were shows, I would hear about games from the distributors or word of mouth. You'd do things similar to what you do today, like visit locations. New Orleans Novelty (Louis Boasberg) had a big arcade downtown and always had the newest games. I'd go over there and see what they had. It was supply and demand like today. Believe it or not, back then locations were still demanding certain equipment. If a good location wanted a new jukebox, he got it!

When I went to the first show I wasn't overwhelmed. It was a show mostly supported by the jukebox manufacturers, which at that time were Rowe, Seeburg, Rock-Ola, and Wurlitzer. There were a few more smaller ones, too. ”

Why was the MOA (Music Operators Association) formed?

“ The MOA was formed basically to counteract adverse legislation in Congress. They were trying to take away the jukebox exemption. In other words, the performing rights societies wanted to eliminate the jukebox exemption from the copyright law. MOA and the jukebox manufacturers successfully fought all attempts to eliminate the exemption until the late '70s.

I was very much involved in fighting the copyright law and keeping jukeboxes from paying copyright royalties for many years. You have to understand that jukebox operators paid a lot of royalties that were built into the purchase of the record. When you bought the music you automatically paid the fee. Especially back when 78s were the record of choice. These records would literally wear out in a week. In the early '40s a couple of record manufacturers, one I know was RCA, put the same song on both sides of the 78 rpm record if it was a popular song, like "Stardust." That way the record would last maybe three weeks. Back then jukeboxes didn't play both sides of the record like they do today. The record would wear out in three weeks or so, and you'd go to the location, turn it over, and you'd get another week, maybe two out of it. One thing that showed is that the record manufacturers were interested in the jukebox operators back then.

But you can understand that we were paying royalties. And the royalties were paid directly to the artist by the

MARTIN
METROPOLITAN ACCORDIAN BAND
LOS ANGELES CALIFORNIA
WALLY NIMS DIRECTOR

Wally Nims was director of the Metropolitan Accordion Band and little brother Bob (l) learned to play so well he played in the French Quarter to make extra money when his business was just taking off.

manufacturer. The performing rights societies didn't like that because they didn't get their hands on the money.

What happened in the late '70s is most of the copyright law was totally rewritten and the jukebox exemption got caught up in it. We were successful in defending the jukebox exemption on what I call punitive legislation because they were attacking just jukeboxes. But when they rewrote all the copyright law there was much more involved and we ended up having to pay a fee. The House passed a bill calling for $8 a year per jukebox, while the Senate wanted much more. They compromised and that's how we have gotten to the point we are now. It started out as the $8 proposed by the House, but gradually increased over the years.. ”

How did you get involved in MOA?

“ In the '50s I got involved as a distributor appearing on behalf of the jukebox industry in front of some judiciary committees in Washington at the request of the jukebox manufacturers. I was an active member of the Small Business Association, and I asked them to support the cause, which they felt was worthwhile. So I also appeared in Washington on behalf of the Small Business Association. During those appearances, I joined MOA, probably around '59 or '60. I figured that since the association was actively working for operators, and was a bonafide organization, I would join.

The next year they asked me to go on the board. I agreed. I remember Frank Fabiano, who had a jukebox company in Michigan, was one of those encouraging me to get involved on the board. ”

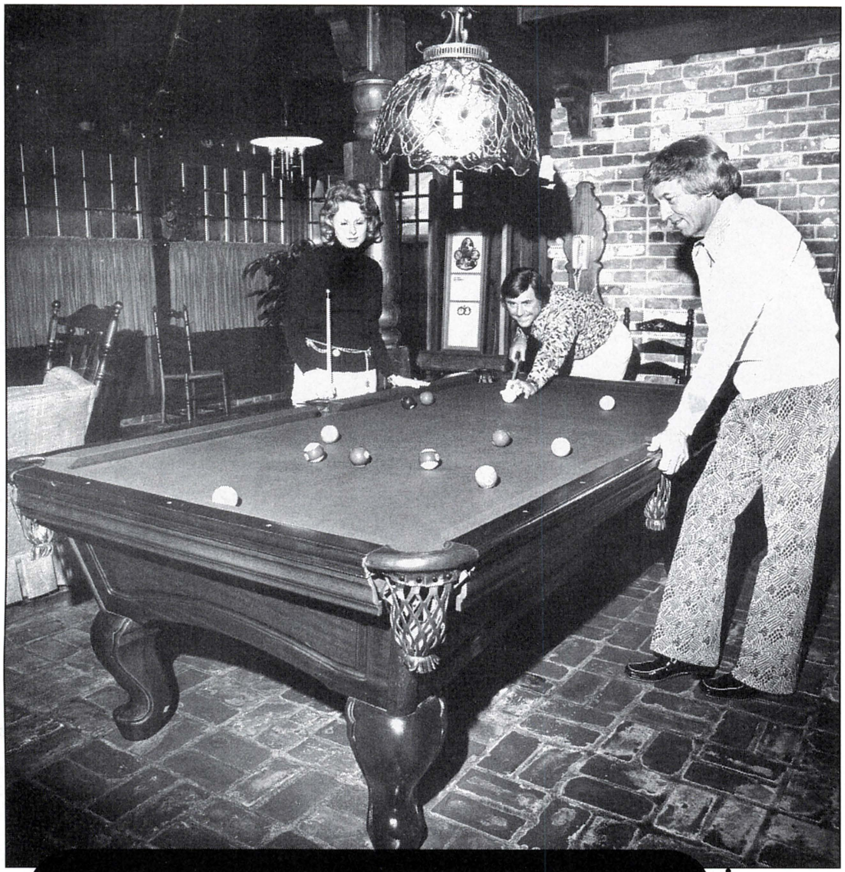
What was the MOA like when you joined?

“ The association had hired Fred Granger as executive director soon after I got involved. He did a great job for our industry and MOA (it became AMOA during his tenure). Fred came on board at a time when they needed someone strong to put everything in order. He was an ex-Navy officer used to making decisions and being in command. But to those who say he made bad decisions, I'll say this: he did not make the decisions, the board did. He'd have things brought up before the board, but they made the decisions. He led AMOA at the request of the board. He was a strong leader and we needed him. And maybe we need someone like that now! I certainly don't fault him. I agreed with him 99 percent of the time, but I didn't agree all of the time. He was pretty firm in his convictions, and he was fair. He stood up for what he believed in and he believed in AMOA. ”

Do you remember why the board decided to hire a management firm instead of an executive director?

“ Leo Droste was the executive director after Fred. He was certainly qualified, and he was a good man. He wasn't, however, a take-charge person. He didn't run AMOA like his own business the way Fred Granger did. Leo was too nice of a guy. He let people sluff off and get away with things they shouldn't have. Consequently, things slipped through the cracks while he was in charge. He ultimately paid the price because it was his responsibility.

From left: Bob and Jerri Nims, Jim and Ernestine Tolisano, and Fred and Maria Sancia Granger.



Bob plays a game of pool with Mr. Mardi Gras himself, Blaine Kern, and Mr. Kern's wife.

That's when we voted to hire a management company, Smith, Bucklin. It was a good move at the time, but it was supposed to be temporary. They were going to help us search for a new executive director. Because of the video game boom, from '82 to '90 AMOA grew also and Smith, Bucklin was there to help them handle problems created by that growth. I know that it's gotten to the point where it would be hard to run the association any other way. ❞

What was the evolution of Louisiana's pinball?

❝ To show you how popular these games were in New Orleans, I was flying into New Orleans from Chicago on one of my many trips there to visit one of the manufacturers. As we landed the captain of the aircraft made the announcement, 'We'll be landing in New Orleans shortly. New Orleans, the land of red beans, cajun queens, and pinball machines.' I was hysterical and thought it was great!

You've got to understand that the pinball games of the '50s and '60s were called bingo machines because they were 'in line' and played like the game bingo. A player could win multiple free games. They were set on nickel play. They always required a federal excise tax stamp (it's been eliminated now) which was a coin-operated gaming device stamp abbreviated COGD. Originally it was $50, but they kept increasing it until it was up to $250 per machine. And there were other state and city taxes. But in Louisiana these games were legal by state law. The unfortunate thing about these legal games is that the Legislature never clarified whether free games could be reimbursed for cash or merchandise. ❞

Who were some of the people that influenced your industry career?

❝ Of course, Fred Granger was someone I looked up to, as I explained earlier. Another was Al Simon, another Rock-Ola distributor from New York. His son, Richard Simon, is still in the coin-op industry. Al was a very positive influence on me. His office was on 10th Avenue in Manhattan; he had a world of experience.

Andrew Monte, my first boss when I began with A.M. Amusement, was a big influence. He looked out for me and protected me. When I went to work for him the first time I was only 17. Here I was a young kid alone in New Orleans. I think he was worried that I'd develop bad habits, so he always gave me advice and was protective. Another positive influence on my life was W.R. 'Bud' Patton. He owned and operated a second-generation music and vending route in Modesto, Calif. (Patton Music Co.). His son-in-law Jim Reed continues as a third-generation operator. Bud taught me the value of balance within your business. In other words, you can't put everything on one end. Like scales, you have to keep everything in balance.

U. S. Senator Ed Zorinsky would have to be on that list. I met him around 1960 when he was working for his father, who owned HZ Vending in Omaha, and was in the vending business and a Rock-Ola distributor. I met him on a Rock-Ola distributor trip. We became friends and after a couple of years he asked me why I didn't get into the coin-op pool table business. He thought I should get into it and felt I could make money. Ed was operating them in Omaha. He was doing so well it was hard not to believe him. So that's what I did. Ed introduced me to Ewald Fischer and I would soon became a Fischer distributor. It was an important day in my life. ❞

Were coin-op pool tables popular in New Orleans then?

❝ Not at all. After I became a Fischer distributor, I went to my old boss and mentor, Andrew Monte, about operating pool tables. He said he didn't want to fool with that. But I was persistent, finally convincing him by saying we should go in on a truckload of pool tables even though we had to pay cash. He asked how many were in a truckload, which was about 30. We decided to put some on each of our routes and keep it a separate business. They were the first coin-op pool tables in New Orleans. ❞

How was the reaction from your customers and locations?

❝ Since there were pinballs and jukeboxes, it wasn't that easy to convince someone to try them. They asked

PITTSFIELD
PIG DAY
PIG

Bob and his wife Jerri during his year as AMOA president at a state show in Galena, Ill. A member of the association gave them the T-shirts.

things like: How would it fit? Where would you put it? It was kind of hard to find a place with the room. Sometimes you had to tell them they'd have to get rid of one or two tables and chairs. It didn't take off like crazy, but it provided a good, steady income. Andrew Monte was happy.

By 1976 we were concentrating on pool tables because the bingo pinballs were out. Almost every operator had been operating the bingos so we began convincing them to operate pool tables.

I would love to hear the story of why the annual golf tournament held during AMOA's board meeting is called The Bob Nims Golf Classic.

In the Spring 1979 Wayne Hesch was president of AMOA and I was vice president. Our mid-term board meeting was at Executive House Golf Resort at Disney World right on a gorgeous golf course. I came up with the idea of having a golf tournament. We had four threesomes. There was a winner, a runner-up, and we even gave an award to the guy who did the worst! Not only did I organize that first tournament, I even bought trophies for the winners in the pro shop.

I don't remember everyone who played but I remember who won—Bud Patton. He was a really good golfer and he was at that time president of the California Golf Association. He was a popular winner.

The next year I was AMOA president, and naturally we repeated the tournament. After that we had one every year. A couple of years after I was off the board, the board adopted a resolution to call the tournament the Bob Nims Golf Classic. I was honored by my peers. Next year will be our 20th Annual Golf Classic. ”

I bet you don't even have to buy the trophies anymore!

“ Actually, for the past few years the tournament has been sponsored by these manufacturers: Williams, Rowe/AMi, and Valley Recreation Products. Nobody who belongs to AMOA needs to feel that the association is spending money on this tournament because, thanks to our sponsors, it doesn't cost AMOA anything.

I know that you were selling to the home game room market long before it became fashionable in this industry. How did you get started?

“ As I mentioned before, when I got into the coin-op pool table business, it wasn't very popular in Louisiana. I was operating coin-op tables and I was a distributor for Fischer, which made coin-op pool tables. One day in about 1967 the Brunswick salesman came into my showroom on St. Charles Avenue. (he was a nice guy and a golfer, too!) and asked me if I'd ever thought about selling home tables. I hadn't, but I realized that it was something I could do. It's not a stand-on-its-own business because if you had to make a living selling home equipment you'd starve. But being in the coin-op business already, selling to the home market subsidizes some of your overhead.

I'd like to end with words you spoke 21 years ago and your comments on them: "The industry is on a threshold of what I feel will be tremendous days ahead. There will be a tremendous boom in communications between the industry and the general public, which will help the industry forward."

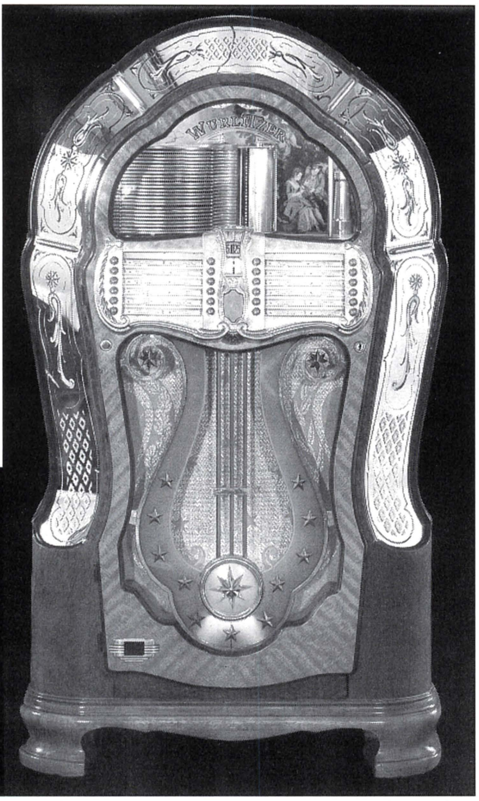
I would have to say that after that statement we did start establishing a rapport with the general public. They got to know us as being just like the good, down-to-earth, hardworking people next door. The public relations of the AMOA board and all the state associations has made a difference because they have been communicating with the general public. You can't get the better image without investing your time. The AMOA directors on a national level have done a great job.

I feel that what they've done recently, although prudent, may not be positive. By taking the board members from 48 down to 21 it will limit the number of operators involved on a national level, and we still have a job to do. Maybe we don't have the uphill struggle we had at one time, but we better not lose our communication skills.

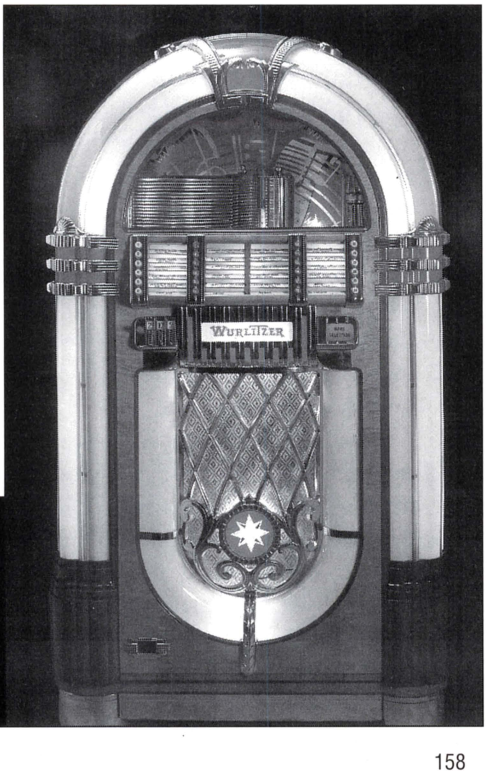
Maybe AMOA can form a stronger coalition with our state associations. ”▲

COMPANY PROFILE

You've got the box, NOW YOU NEED PARTS



The box that started Ken's passion, the Wurlitzer 1080. Fewer than 8,000 of this model were sold in 1947-1948. It had a record changer and sound system from the Model 1015.



The Wurlitzer Model 1015 is the most popular jukebox of all time. Over 56,000 were shipped in 1946-1947.

If you're one of the lucky ones who happens to find an old classic jukebox, your joy may turn to disappointment when you can't find those elusive parts to restore it to its former glory. Just like a classic car, the original beauty (and value) is determined by the parts you use to revive it. A Wurlitzer 1015, for instance, just won't be a Wurlitzer 1015 without those parts originally designed to make it the legend it has become.

Fret no more my friend, Ken Arnold Inc. has just about everything you'll need to have that masterpiece up and running again, except perhaps those old records like "Slow Boat to China" or "Three Coins in the Fountain" that your parents used to dance to, embarrassing you to death in front of your friends! Wait, Ken said it's just possible he could help you find some of those records! In fact, he told us that if you're looking for a part he doesn't have, if he knows where one is, he'll let you know.

Ken Arnold took a hobby he loved and made it into a career. And he's been doing it for about seven years. He manufactures reproduction parts for a lengthy list of jukeboxes. His business started when he needed the lower fluted plastics for the AMi-A, which was made in 1946-1947. Here's the story: Ken was interested in slot machines quite a few years ago and he and his wife Vivien had gone to see one for sale. The gentleman also had a Wurlitzer 1080 that Vivien fell in love with. Ken picked up the tale: "My wife just went wild over this jukebox. Then the man said those three little words that made my heart skip a beat—'it's for sale!' Vivien and I pooled our money and bought it. It was our first jukebox."

After a few more purchases, Ken said, he realized he was in a hobby he couldn't afford! At that point he began buying and selling old jukeboxes to support his hobby. He had made a deal with an enthusiast in Italy which included two AMi As, among quite a few others. Both of them needed the lower fluted plastics, which he assured the Italian customer he would get for him. "I figured it would be simple to get them, thinking they'd be pretty plentiful. I was wrong and couldn't find them anywhere."

Ken continued, "I'm from the old school where your word is your bond, so I knew I had to get those parts. To fulfill that promise I had to have the parts made. With the cost of the molds and everything, it didn't make sense to make only two so I stuck my neck out and had 52 of them made. I sent two to Italy as promised and I advertised the other 50 for sale.

"I was amazed at the number of calls I got, but most of them were looking for parts other than the fluted plastics. They wanted to know if I had other

Here's Ken (r) with his friend Craig, who helps out at trade shows like this one.

parts," Ken advised.

But Ken didn't have other parts. Not then, anyway. Soon he was filling needs for front door glasses, curtain sets, and the list of parts grew. At first he had others making the parts, but soon tired of dealing with outside companies. "I decided to teach myself how to do things like screen printing and cutting glass," Ken divulged.

Ken admitted that he learned through trial and error, but said he was amazed at what he could learn if he was willing to take a chance and not be afraid to make a mistake. "I've been told I have a natural ability in making things and working with my hands. I was a carpenter by trade. I asked a lot of questions and was soon manufacturing my own parts," he offered.

Today his parts line consists of cosmetic printed glass and plastic parts for the AMi models A, B, C, D40, and D80, Continental I and II, Wurlitzer mech. boards from 1937 to 1957, back doors and most wood parts for the Model 1015 and Model 1100, and Seeburg Models 100-A (1949 through the DS (1962) series. Parts for these include domes and lid glass, side glass, instruction glass, title glass, capacitor kits for amplifiers and receivers, tubes, cabinet keys, service manuals, 3W1 wallbox parts, and more. He also sells the front and side glass for the SS160 and the front door glass for the LS1.

He's expanding into metal parts and cast plastic parts. Currently he's working on glass and plastic parts for the Seeburg models from the late '60s and early '70s, primarily the Electra and the Fleetwood (1965-1966 Discotheque) and the 1971 USC 1 (Musical Bandshell) and USC 2 (Bandshell Firestar).

Ken also makes parts on request. Most of the parts available are manufactured in his own shop. As he explained, "I manufacture most of my parts in my own shop to control the quality. I cut the glass and plastic, custom mix ink colors, and screen print the parts."

Interestingly, Ken is so determined to capture originality in his parts that he said he only makes a part if he has an original to work from. "This ensures that I can duplicate the size, artwork, type style, and color of the original part," he noted.

Since Ken mentioned that first Wurlitzer 1080 that stole his wife's heart, we couldn't help but ask about his current collection. Here is what he has in his house: of course, the Wurlitzer 1080, a Seeburg 100-A, a Seeburg 147 "Trash Can" that he said anyone who knows jukeboxes will know what he's talking about, a Seeburg Model R that was a birthday present to Vivien, an AMi Singing Tower, and an AMi Model A. There are also another 15 in the warehouse waiting to be restored.

For more information or a catalog, contact Ken Arnold Inc., 640 Devonshire Blvd., Longwood, FL 32750; phone or fax (407)332-6133. ▲

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STATE
MEETING

MOMA members gather for summer conference

The recent summer meeting and conference of the Minnesota Operators of Music and Amusements was held at Arrowwood, a Radisson Resort on Lake Darling in Alexandria, Minn., along with the monthly board of directors meeting and the association's annual general membership meeting. MOMA president Bill Boerger of Bros. Music & Games in St. Cloud presided over the event.

Communications consultant Kateri Schmerler conducted a seminar titled "How to Relate to a Complaining Customer" (or, "Handling a Location Owner Who is a Pain in the Ass—Made Easier").

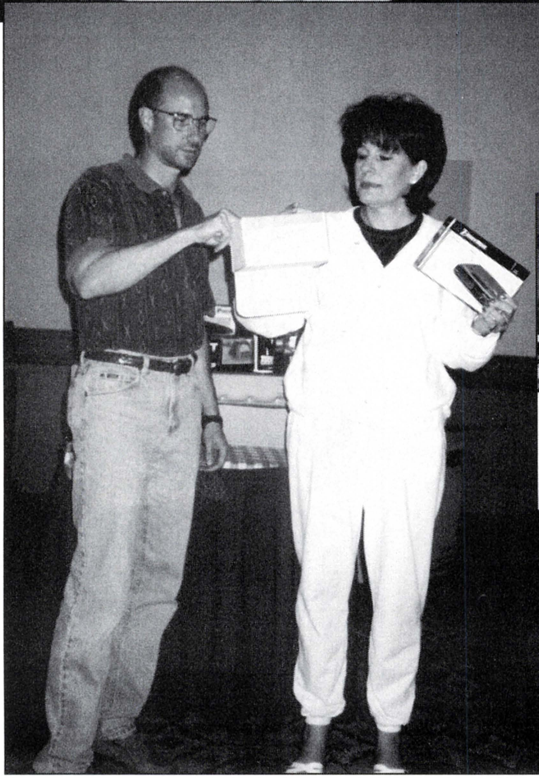
The possibility of state sales tax relief was discussed in another seminar, which was conducted by Dan Thibault, a CPA and attorney with Ernst and Young.

During the course of the two-day event, meetings with owners, managers, and league coordinators present were held by both the MOMA Pool League Association and the MOMA Dart League Association. Issues related to the 1997-98 league season and upcoming state tournaments were covered.

An outdoor barbecue on the second night was interrupted by threatening weather, but did not dampen the spirit of the evening. A down-home chicken and rib dinner was followed by creative handling of door prize drawings by Linda Winstead of Lieberman Music Co. of Minneapolis and Dave Gabrielli of Hanson Distributing Co. in Minneapolis, who also provided the door prizes.

The gathering closed out with the annual MOMA Golf Tournament. The event was coordinated by MOMA's longtime executive director Hy Sandler. Sandler and Winstead planned the function. ▲

Information on the MOMA events was provided by Hy Sandler.



FROM TOP: Gene Winstead of American Amusement Arcades with his sister Linda Winstead of Lieberman Music Co.

Dick Hawkins (l) of D & R Vending with Leroy Smith of Smitty Music & Vending.

Door prize providers and presenters: Dave Gabrielli of Hanson Distributing Co. and Linda Winstead of Lieberman Music Co.

Seminar attendees gathered for sessions on tax relief and dealing with location owners.

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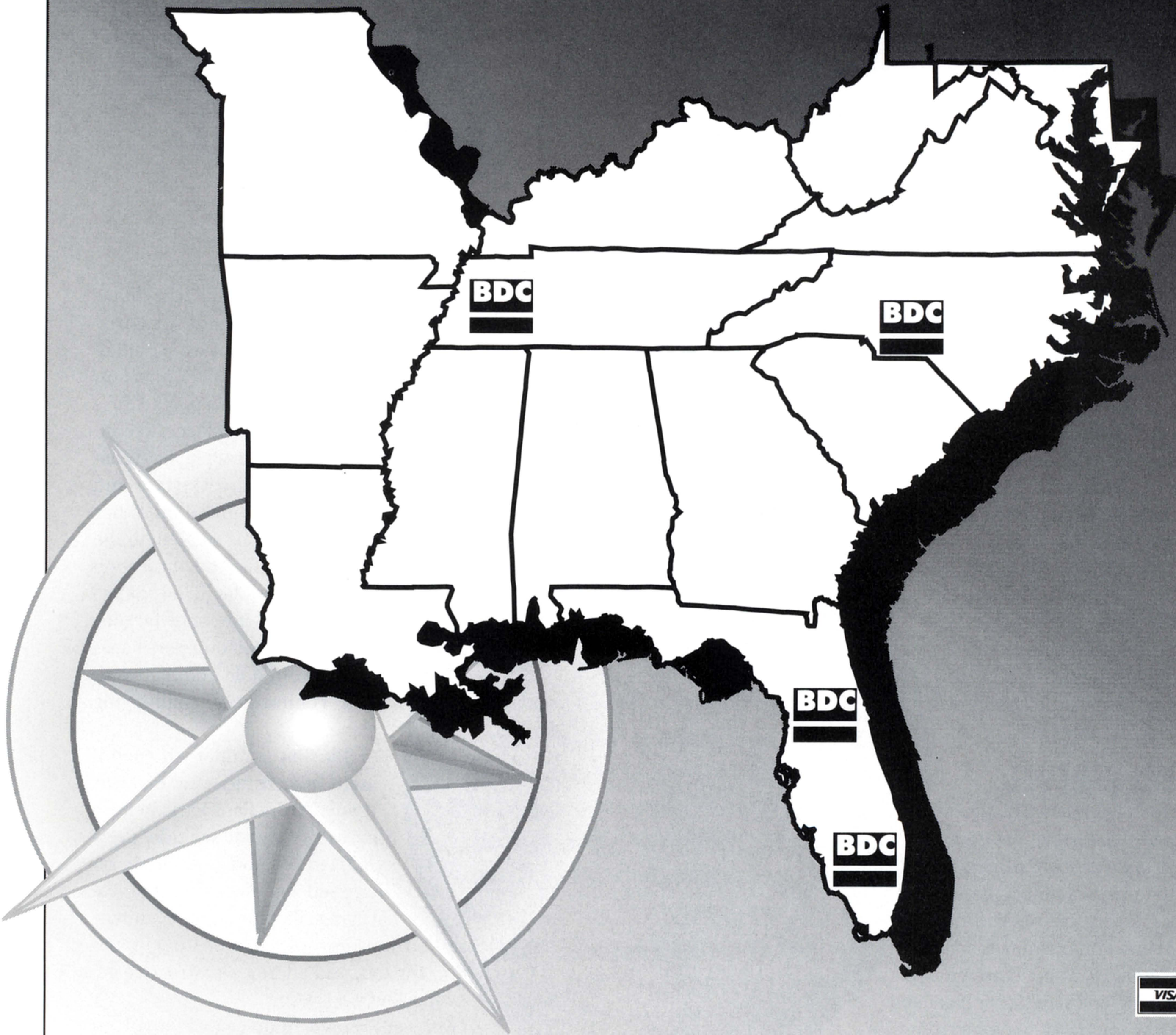

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FLIPPER FUN

BALLY'S celebrity pinballs

TIM FERRANTE

All right, so none of us qualify, but there were three such recipients of this distinction: Evel Knievel, Bobby Orr, and Dolly Parton. We thought there were more and you're probably thinking the same thing, but go ahead and check for yourself. Remember the criteria: a Bally pinball, inspired by a living person whose name is also the machine *(Capt. Fantastic* doesn't qualify). There are three, just three. Yes, there are more by other companies, and there were the several custom-produced games for people like Aaron Spelling and Joel Silver. Overall, though, there aren't that many notables who were chosen for commercial backglass immortality. Still, the prospect of collecting all the mass-produced "real people" machines is certainly an achievable goal.

> ***Imagine it. You're famous! You're popular! You're salable! And Bally, a major pinball manufacturer, is paying you to be the theme of its next pinball machine! We're not talking about fictional characters like Flash Gordon or Elvira, or groups like the Rolling Stones or KISS, or even deceased legends like Mata Hari. We're talking about living, breathing personalities whose modern day presence was worthy of flipper fame.***

EVEL KNIEVEL

As far as post-1947 pinball is concerned, daredevil cyclist Evel Knievel was the first living celebrity to have a pinball game marketed solely on present-day fame. At the time, Knievel was a media phenomenon, synonymous with anything bold, brassy, or risky and milking the moment for everything he could get. And who could blame him? Anyone dull-witted enough to hop onto a motorcycle and jump over umpteen buses certainly deserved some attention!

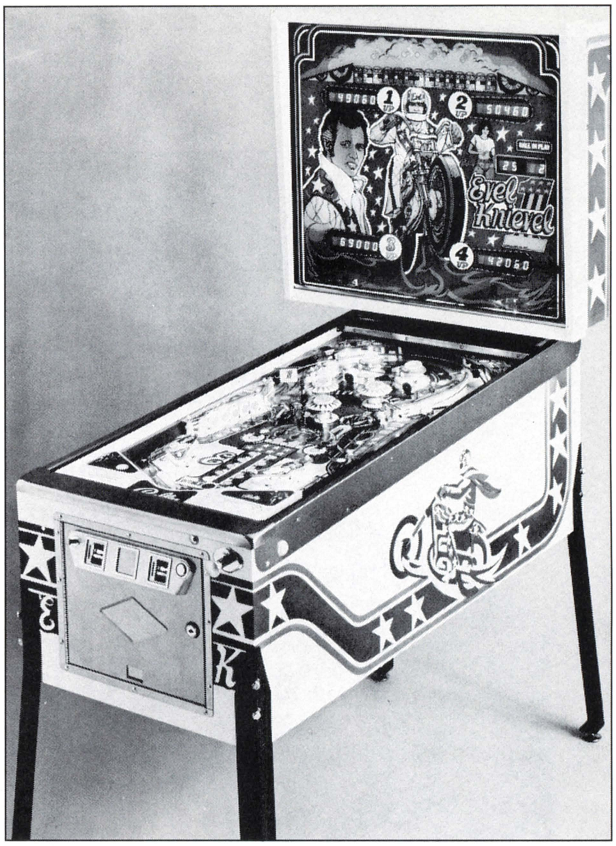
In the mid-'70s, the resourceful Knievel had become as recognizable as Mickey Mouse, and Bally swallowed his licensing hook in 1976. By early 1977, a tiny production run (155 units) of electromechanical *Evel Knievel (EK)* machines were put into the distributor pipeline. It was designed by staffer Gary Gayton whose earlier *Aladdin's Castle* pinball sold relatively well. (He would later design Bally hits *Lost World, Strikes & Spares*, and *Star Trek.*) Gayton's playfield relied on typically popular game features. He placed five inline drop targets along the left edge of playfield center. Two spinners (with Knievel's stars and stripes #1 logo) were mounted on either side of the alleys leading the ball to the top of the playfield. Add three pop bumpers, a center playfield spot target, three right side spot targets, and a pair of dead bumpers flanking a kickout hole and the result is a comfortably challenging game.

By that summer, the solid-state electronic version was ready. Artist Paul Faris, whose industry credits include *Eight Ball, Xenon*, and *Goldeneye*, redesigned his electromechanical backglass, flipping Knievel's image from the right side of the glass to the left, and adding an attractive gal sporting a #1 T-shirt.

Knievel's representatives were involved with the project, Faris recalls. "Evel himself actually visited us at the Chicago factory when he was in town to cycle jump over a tank filled with sharks. He had me change the angle of his cycle that I had animated across the top of the glass. I had the front wheel too low and he said, 'I couldn't land the bike the way you have it. The front wheel should be higher in the air.' A few days later he was rehearsing his jump, crashed, and canceled his huge media event!"

Faris continued, "We had to reverse the electromechanical images and change the logo sizes to accommodate the solid-state layout. If we left Evel on the right side, he would have had credits and ball-in-play windows for eyes!"

EK was a first in more ways than one. "The first fully electronic commercial game!" hollers the hyperbole-filled four-page sales brochure. Sure, there were electronic hybrids before it, and technically this game wasn't "fully" electronic since it still relied on a chime box as its sound source, but now its coils were fired by the new solenoid driver board. Nevertheless, the solid-state *EK* would add still another first in its already burgeoning ego-driven theme. It was the first Bally electronic game to sell over 10,000 units (14,000). Only *Capt. Fantastic* and *Wizard* had reached those heights and they, of course, were electromechanicals.



According to Bally, *EK* assured buyers that the replacement of "... complex cables; numerous soldered connections; and dozens of relays with simple, compact, positive-action solid-state components by world-famous electronics manufacturers ..." was a good thing. And it was! They went on to say that, " ... positive inspection methods, adaptable only to electronics, insures delivery of pinball games as perfect as the human mind can produce."

Later on, after thousands of these wonderful new games were given the real test at the arcade level, Bally realized that they had some design flaws. One chronic ailment was the rectifier board connectors. The pins carrying the higher voltages were heating up due to inadequate connector design. White molex connector blocks were sprouting brown and black burn marks, slowly melting from the resistance build-up of poor conductivity. A three-sided trifurcon connector was advised as a replacement but more often than not, operators simply soldered the offending wire directly to the pin or ignored it altogether. Yeah, it was a fun time in the early days of electronic pinball.

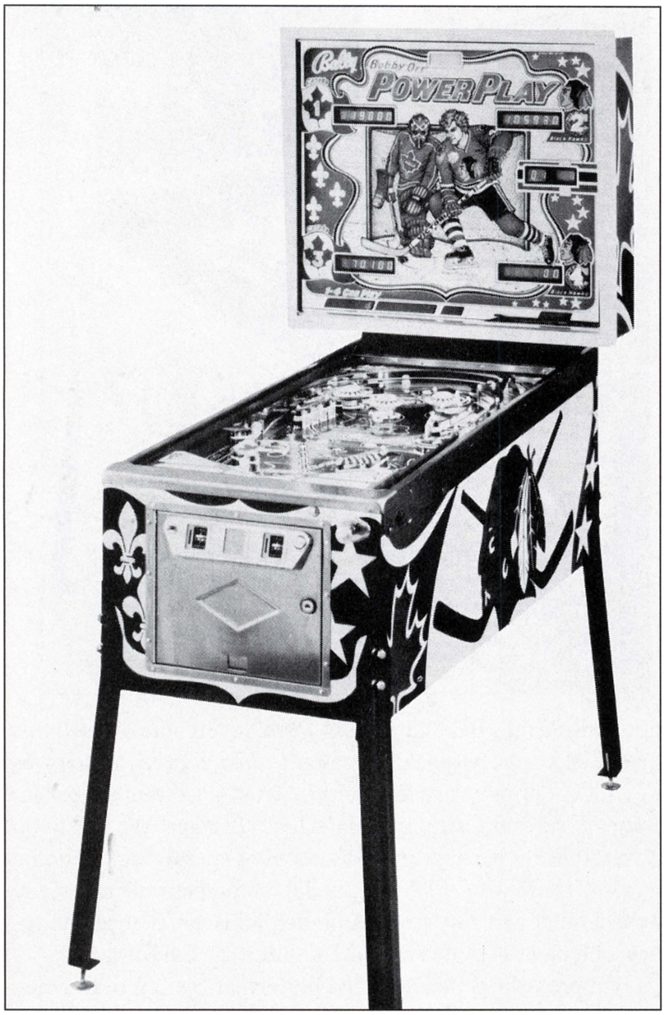
While Bally was training its masses on this new technology, its famous personality was systematically ruining his career. Knievel verbally (and physically!) began assaulting the very people who helped put him on top. His 15 minutes of fame was about to run out. Faris recalled, "Shortly after the release of the solid-state game, Knievel began getting into all kinds of trouble. Suddenly, this hero was beating people up and creating a lot of negative publicity. At the time, we were readying a scaled-down home model for distribution through a retail chain, Montgomery Ward, I believe. I don't remember any games actually getting into stores because Bally pulled the plug due to Knievel's behavior. Bally wasn't even going to sell this machine! We very quickly created *Galaxy Ranger*, which was Kevin O'Connor's very first game. (Artist O'Connor's work includes *KISS* and *Creature from the Black Lagoon.*) We had to do it very quickly because this was our shot at entering the home market. There were *EK* home model prototypes built and if any did get out it was very few." (A photo of this scarce machine appears on page 170 of "Arcade Treasures" by Bill Kurtz.)

Bad press, lawsuits, canceled performances ... it didn't matter. There was barely an arcade standing that didn't have an *EK* machine. It was a whopper hit sending Bally on an unprecedented run of eight more titles whose sales would top five figures.

"The Canadian-born Orr had become one of Chicago's own when he joined the Blackhawks as a free agent, so this was an especially fortuitous license."

BOBBY ORR

The folks in Chicago probably felt a little more comfortable with their Bobby Orr license, dubbing the hockey-themed release, *Bobby Orr Power-Play.* They couldn't have asked for a more wholesome product representative. Orr's exemplary career with the Boston Bruins had reached its peak during the '69-'70 season when the 22-year-old player scored over 100 points as a defenseman, an unheard of accomplishment. It was an incredible season for Orr, as he led his team to the Stanley Cup (something the Bruin's hadn't done for 29 seasons) and scored one of the most memorable goals in NHL history during overtime in the fourth game.



By 1977, when Bally secured Orr's likeness and name, the hockey great had battered his knees so badly that he rarely saw the ice. The previous year, the Canadian-born Orr had become one of Chicago's own when he joined the Blackhawks as a free agent, so this was an especially fortuitous license. The athlete's ice record was so profound that even at this advanced stage of his career, Bally's marketing efforts took little more than announcing the machine was available.

Who better to realize the superstar's playfield and artwork than pinball's then reigning superstars, Greg Kmiec and Dave Christensen? The handsome Kmiec was one of the industry's best designers, and sometime partner Christensen had 1972's *Fireball* on his extensive list of accomplishments. By this time, the duo had already added the aforementioned *Capt. Fantastic* and *Wizard* to their resumes.

Was it the recognizable themes that made their games so successful, or was it the dynamic appearance and challenging play? We tend to believe the latter since pre-*Bobby Orr Power-Play* Kmiec and/or Christensen machines with no pre-sold recognition factors were still excellent sellers. Some examples are *Old Chicago* (Kmiec/Christensen), *Night Rider* (Kmiec/Faris), *Mata Hari* (Jim Patla/Christensen), and *Fireball* (Ted Zale/Christensen).

At first glance, *Bobby Orr PowerPlay* doesn't seem to have much of a playfield at all, the major attraction being a pair of four in-line drop target banks with small left and right center playfield flippers (called Slap Shot Flippers) aimed at them. To be a bit more accurate, it appears they're aimed directly at them! This is part of the ingenious design. What looks to be shooting-fish-in-a-barrel simplicity is really a frustrating course in timing and understanding shot vectors. The upper kickout hole, while an excellent source of quick high scoring, is almost incidental in comparison to repeatedly completing the drop targets. Decorated in a striking red, white, and blue color motif, it's an attractive pinball package.

Bally was still using a chime box for sounds. If you're looking for games that are remarkably easy to work on, these early electronic examples are it. I once resurrected a *Bobby Orr Powerplay* whose power supply module had caught fire, completely destroying it and melting its connectors and wires into a mass of solid, albeit colorful, goo. Tedious wire separation and connector replacement was time-consuming, but the rest of the game was intact. The below playfield gadgetry is wide open, making servicing of assemblies a breeze. These are a joy to work on, allowing easy access, minimal parts availability concerns (not to be confused with game-specific parts like backglasses, playfields, and butyrate light shield sets), and rewarding to play.

As for Bobby Orr himself, it would be less than a year after the release of his silverball namesake before he retired his professional skates forever, playing his last game Nov. 1, 1978 at the age of 30. If you're looking for a singular pinball machine that represents legendary greatness in all of its features (design, art, theme), then *Bobby Orr PowerPlay* would be a prime candidate.

DOLLY PARTON

Bally's last living license was Dolly Parton, a performer whose show business career was about to soar. Had they waited another year or two, they might never have had the opportunity.

The lovely Parton was one of 12 children raised on a small farm in Locust Ridge, Tenn. She loved to sing and by age 12 had already appeared on local television channels. She completed high school and by 1967 had a minor hit single called "Dumb Blonde." That got her a seven-year gig with Porter Wagoner before launching her solo career in 1974.

Around the time of signing the Bally license (1978) she was a nationally-known celebrity with regular media appearances and hit records. She was on the cusp of a successful acting career ("9 to 5") and her pinball machine was simply one of several fast-happening successes.

Her penchant for pinks and lavenders (her live show equipment was once packed in pink cases!) is rampant throughout the game. It is a standout as is her natural endowment. It must have been the ultimate illustration assignment for Dave Christensen whose fondness for buxom women was hardly a secret. Here was his opportunity to draw that reality, not exaggerate it!

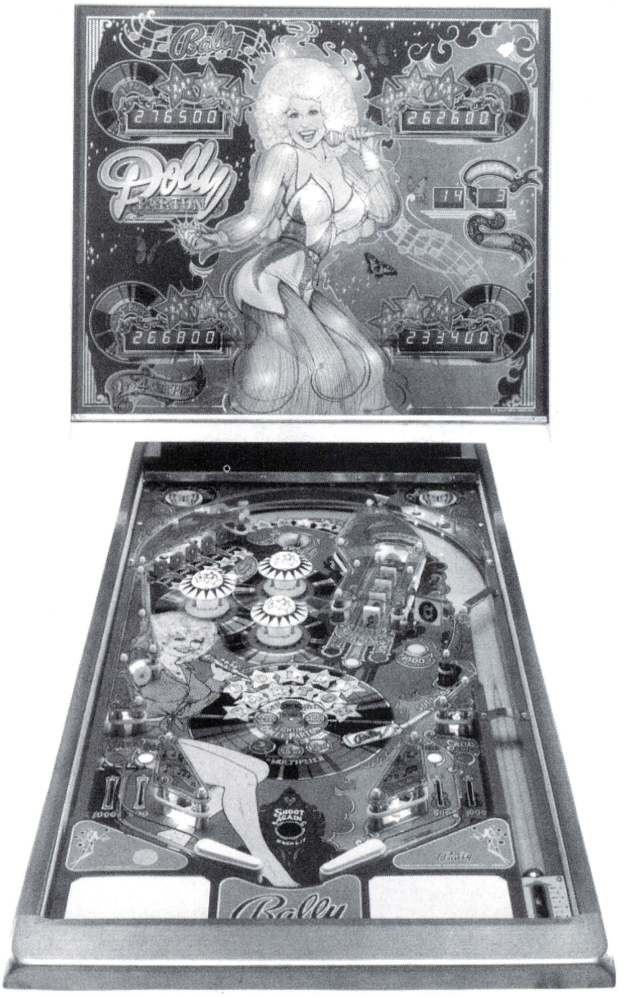
At the time, Faris (then Bally's art director) and licensing exec Tom Nieman visited the entertainer at her Beverly Hills

Hotel suite for her creative input. "She had been recording all day and was probably very tired," Faris explained. "She was very nice, petite, and very beautiful. She was down-to-earth and plain-spoken, forthright and matter-of-fact about her physical attributes. Her main concern about the art was the removal of the nipples Dave had drawn and asked that we make her hands a bit larger and fingers a little longer. Her opinion was that this was artwork and not reality so we could make the modifications.

"She rejected Dave's first concept," Faris revealed. "He had her in typical country singer clothes, denim, rhinestones, and the rest. She was very cognizant of what her schedule and career would be portraying in the months ahead and adapted those things to the look she wanted on the glass."

In his second attempt, Christensen pulled out all the stops. His depiction of Parton is marvelous, a detailed rendering of the artist full of her glamour, beauty, and professional style.

When Bally wasn't employing its new four-color process (i.e. *Supersonic, Lost World,* etc.), the company was using mirrored glass for their backglasses (this type of backglass begins as normal mirrors and the artwork areas are etched away, revealing the clear glass to permit application of inks). It gave artists yet another design element to work with and Christensen used it here with delicate flourish. Even the *Dolly Parton* four-page sales brochure utilized silver embossing on its interior pages!



The *Dolly Parton* pinball game was designed by George Christian. His earlier titles included *Eight Ball* (a behemoth of a hit which sold 20,330 units), *Nitro Groundshaker,* and *Freedom. Dolly Parton* featured one of the earliest uses of a playfield drop target configuration where the targets act as soldier-like obstacles. Players are forced to "remove" four drop targets standing in queue to gain access to a reward-filled spot target.

It's an effective and challenging concept amid its almost obligatory pop bumpers, kickout hole, and spinner target. Christian later used this drop target configuration on *Eight Ball Deluxe,* a pinball classic. It wasn't uncommon for these targets to snap off a bit more quickly than usual and operators oft times used replacements featuring the wrong graphics. Fortunately for today's restorationists the proper replacements are in ample supply, being reproduced from original tooling.

Dolly Parton was fitted with the relatively new Bally sound card. Gone were the chime boxes. The card was equipped with a ROM programmed to play a musical phrase from her gold record hit, "Here You Come Again," the finishing touch to an exquisite silverball homage to a talented and deserving entertainer.

Dolly Parton's game hasn't reached collectibility status amongst coin-op enthusiasts, making it one of those odd conflicts that defy explanation. It was a moderate success at the time with a production run of 7,350 units so they're not in short supply. Collectors are more inclined to choose close production line relatives like *Silverball Mania* or *Paragon* over *Dolly Parton.* Too feminine perhaps? Or is it that pink and pinball just don't go together? Possibly a less than challenging game design? It's all conjecture, but we do predict it will one day achieve its full potential in the mass collector market.

A recent visit to a Parton Web site revealed a fan offering his prized pinball for sale due to his imminent move. He caringly spoke about this machine, as if it were Dolly herself that was being uprooted, proving the game has a dedicated following beyond the coin-op hobby.

Bally wasn't alone in its star quest. Over at 1725 Diversey Parkway, Stern Electronics had signed Ted Nugent and Muhammad Ali (Cassius Marcellus Clay Jr.), its only two "real people" machines. Game Plan would have Hockey Hall of Famer Mike Bossy and Gottlieb's Frank Thomas *Big Hurt* recently paid tribute to the Chicago White Sox first baseman.

Companies also reached into history for real people pins. There was *Attila the Hun* (Game Plan), *Buffalo Bill, Captain Kidd,* and *Cleopatra* (Gottlieb), *Mata Hari* (Bally) and more perhaps. But this is a topic for another time.

"It was incredible during those days," Faris concluded of his Bally stint. "Pinball sales figures went crazy and every few months we were on a new project. I remember one time when we were choosing a video license. It was between "Tron" and some new movie with a character named Indiana Jones. We picked "Tron" ... we should have picked Indiana Jones!" ▲

Tim Ferrante is publisher and editor of GameRoom, a 68-page monthly magazine targeted at the home coin-op collector marketplace. It covers pinball machines, jukeboxes, arcade video, soda pop, slots, and more. Subscriptions are $28 per year (12 issues). For more information, contact GameRoom Magazine, P.O. Box 41, Keyport, NJ 07735-0041; (732) 739-1955; fax (732) 739-2834.

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FROM TOP: Mike McGrath (l) of Shaffer Distributing welcomes Kama and Jeff Reed of B.J. Novelty.

John Dorn (r) of Gold Coin Amusements listens as John Mette of Coin ConneXion explains his product.

Randy Cesco (c) of Atlas Distributing shows *Police Trainer* to Sean Richards (l) and George Vrettos (r) of Hughes Music.

Following the theme of "Tapping Your Potential" the Ohio Coin Machine Association hosted its 23rd Annual Expo Aug. 21-22 at the Ramada University Inn & Conference Center in Columbus, Ohio.

Despite less than favorable market conditions, a large crowd was in attendance: 46 operating firms plus employees and guests, 15 exhibitors with staff and manufacturer representatives, 29 technicians enrolled in two pinball seminars, and 32 avid golfers who persevered through rain.

According to association executive director Paul Corey, the numbers were down from the '96 Expo, which was a super year, but statistics still were impressive.

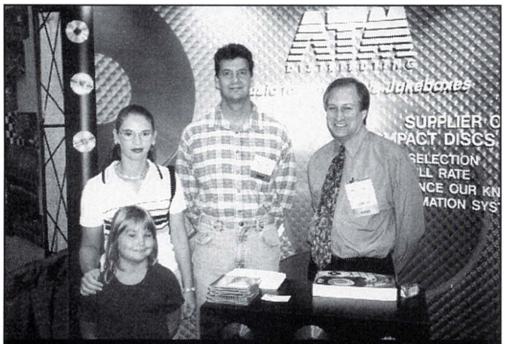
Sega Pinball's Eric Winston and Williams Electronics Games' Tom Cahill conducted the pinball seminars, which covered set-ups, audits, adjustments, modifications, diagnostics, flippers, other mechanical devices, and general troubleshooting. Attendees had ample opportunity to ask questions after the presentations.

The trade show floor, which included 30 booths open in the evening, showcased the latest coin-op games and support services for route operators. In addition, the event was the occasion for the Ohio debut of Cybertainment Systems' downloadable jukebox. The software system, which has been in development for two years, was placed in an older jukebox cabinet as a conversion kit.

A buffet dinner with no speeches highlighted the evening, preceded by a Phillip Morris-sponsored reception. Earlier in the day the OCMA/Ed Shaffer Golf Tourney was held at

THE LAMP DOCTOR

Jim Parkevich (r) of The Lamp Doctor shows bulbs to Harold Laughlin of Laughlin Music & Vending.



Wes Lowe (r) of ATM Distributing shows the new master record/CD catalogue to Billy Clum of J & V Coin Machine with his wife Vonda and daughter Siearra.

From left: Susan Christensen of Cybertainment Systems, Jim Hayes of Gem Music, AMOA president Jerry Derrick, and Bruce "Buck" Bechtold of Cybertainment with the company's jukebox downloading kit in an older cabinet.

Bent Tree Golf Club; Todd Martin of NSM won low gross and AMOA president Jerry Derrick won low net. Door prizes were awarded on both days of the Expo.

The second day began with the annual breakfast meeting and a full agenda. Speakers included OCMA president Rodney Stebelton; board chairman Michael A. Zappa; OCMA

OCMA creates Scholarship Fund

INAUGURAL
OCMA
AUGUST 22, 1997

By the inaugural poster for the Paul A. Corey Scholarship Fund, (l-r): Michael Zappa, Paul Corey, and David Corey.

At OCMA's 23rd Annual Expo board chairman Michael Zappa of Lorain Music proudly announced the formation of the OCMA Paul A. Corey Scholarship Fund, to the total surprise of the association's longtime executive director.

Corey was visibly moved when Zappa unveiled the poster announcing the kickoff of the scholarship program. The entire membership present stood for a standing ovation as Zappa expounded on the many accomplishments of the organization over the past 21 years that Corey has represented OCMA.

"Without his strong guidance and foresight, OCMA would not be the stable and well respected organization that is recognized both statewide and nationally," said Zappa. "We owe Paul Corey a great deal of gratitude for his hard work and dedication to the industry. He has continually taught us political and life lessons, many that I personally will never forget."

As Corey approached the podium for a few brief remarks, his voice quavered as he thanked everyone for their friendship, trust, and cooperation over the years. Corey said, "We win as a team and we lose as a team. The OCMA Scholarship Fund is a testament to what an organization of 90 members can do when it works together."

The board plans to issue a $500 scholarship to its first recipient sometime next year. Zappa was the first contributor; he donated $250. For more information, contact OCMA at 6161 Busch Blvd., Suite 87, Columbus, OH 43229; (614)888-9772; fax (614)888-9767. ▲

From left: Bruce Hoffman, Jay Bender, and Jim Misuraca of Cleveland Coin and George Haydocy of Rock-Ola.

employee benefits specialist John Skinner, who outlined the potential for a property and casualty program exclusively for OCMA members; and Michael A. Petrecca of Cooper & Lybrands who detailed the changes in the U.S. Tax Code as they impact small business owners. Petrecca also distributed a 175-page analysis, "1997 Tax Legislation."

AMOA president Jerry Derrick was the featured speaker. He detailed the proposed AMOA restructuring plan to be voted upon at the AMOA International Expo in Atlanta and discussed renewed hope for the dollar coin, tobacco vending concerns, and the AAMA/AMOA Video Game Code of Conduct.

During the business session OCMA members re-elected two directors to new three-year terms: Nancy Westerhaus Baxter of Pioneer Services in Cincinnati and Larry Van Brackel of A. Van Brackel & Sons in Defiance. Elected to three-year terms were: Dean DeCarlo of Bell Music Co. in Akron and Dewey S. Laughlin of Laughlin Music & Vending in Athens. Sean Richards of Hughes Music in Springfield was elected to a one-year unexpired term.

Seven directors still fulfilling terms include Rodney Stebelton of Stebelton Music in Lancaster, Phil Elum of Elum Music in Massillon, James Comella of Cadillac Music in Cleveland, Dan Harder of Shaffer Services in Columbus, John Rizek of Big City in Columbus, Don L. Wessels of Coin Systems in Columbus, and Ryck E. Zarick of All Star Vending in Toledo.

Also continuing on the board is immediate past president Michael A. Zappa. Officer elections for the 1998 term will be available in time for the next issue.

Special thanks are extended to OCMA's administrative director Judith Martin and executive vice president David Corey, along with board chairman Michael Zappa, for all their work in organizing and orchestrating the successful event. ▲

Information on the OCMA Expo was provided by Paul Corey and David Corey.

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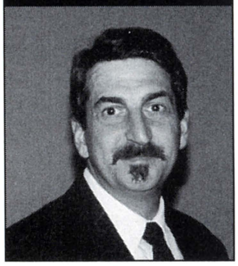


The end of the plague

A Play Meter Monthly Exclusive

RANDY FROMM

Which would you say are the most common repairs you make on your route or in your amusement arcade? I've never done any statistical analysis, but following the obvious problems with joysticks, buttons, and coin mechanisms (the things that move or allow for the insertion of foreign matter), I would put bad connections pretty high on the list of "Things That Fail."

Bad connections happen so frequently that I have made it a part of my routine when I'm working on a game to remove and reseat connectors without bothering to determine what the connector connects and whether or not it could actually have anything to do with the problem in the game. The same holds true for reseating or removing and replacing the socketed integrated circuits such as the PROMs. The way I figure it, even if it's not bad, I may be preventing a future failure.

As most experienced game techs know, this technique is often sucessful in reviving an otherwise dead or malfunctioning PCB or system. Just the act of pulling it all apart and putting it back together will often make things work. We may not know exactly what we did to fix it but it's working and that's really all we care about. This type of repair is often referred to as "FM." Think about it for a second. It'll come to you.

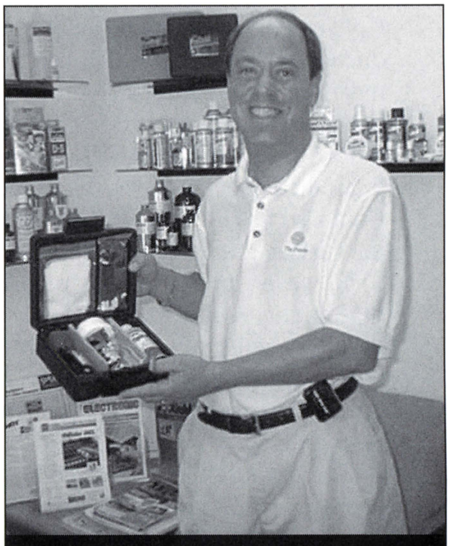
This type of repair is simple and doesn't require much in the way of troubleshooting skills, but wouldn't it be better to not have to make this type of repair at all? What if there was a way to prevent connector problems before they happen rather than driving to a location to repair a piece of equipment that's already failed.

I have found the cure for coin-op hardware's most prolonged illness, the connector plague. Oddly enough, the solution is right in my own back yard in San Diego, Calif.

Preaching the gospel of preventative maintanence for connectors, CAIG Laboratories manufactures a product that is ideally suited to the rugged demands of coin-op. It's called ProGold and it's a chemical treatment that is formulated to improve conductivity and provide long-lasting protection on gold, precious metals, and their base metals. It conditions connectors, contacts, and other metal surfaces to enhance their conductivity—their ability to efficiently transmit electrical signals.

ProGold provides protection for connectors

"Usually customers or service people come to us after there's a problem, instead of treating the potential problem before it starts." said CAIG president Mark Lohkemper.

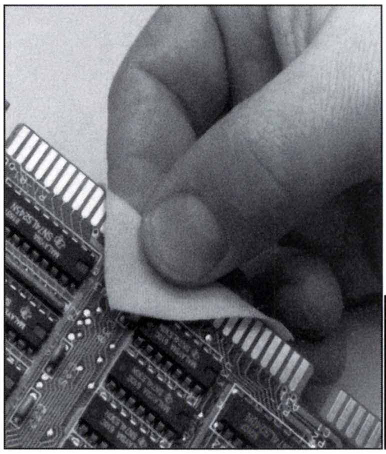


CAIG Laboratories' president Mark Lohkemper shows off of his company's electronic maintenance kits.

Stressing the importance of taking a pro-active approach to service, Lohkemper said that the best time to take action is when the game is new; ideally at the time the game is manufactured.

"The problem is that as soon as you remove and replace the connector a few times, you scratch the gold off," said Lohkemper. "It's actually worse! When you apply this [connector] a few times, you scratch the gold off. Now you have bare copper to bare copper and copper oxodizes very quickly. When you fix something by taking the connector off and putting it back on, you're breaking through that layer of oxidation."

"What our product does for any surface, especially the gold, is that it lubricates to reduce insertion resistance which helps protect the gold surface," said Lohkemper, indicating the value of us-



ProGold can be applied with a premoistened wipe as well as by numerous other methods.

ing ProGold at the OEM level, before the connectors are applied. "If this is a brand-new connector and hasn't been inserted yet, our product will penetrate the gold plating and molecularly bond to the base metal. It seals out oxygen."

Conduction through a ProGold coated surface takes place in three ways. First, ProGold can be displaced by electrical arc, shock wave, or simple mechanical pressure and will redistribute itself along the surface when the disturbance is removed. Second, a thin insulating film of ProGold can be dispersed by an electrical field. Finally, conduction takes place through very thin films of ProGold by means of a quantum-mechanical phenomenon called tunneling where electrons travel from one side of a thin film of ProGold to the other without passing through. This is the same effect that gives the tunnel diode its name. ProGold also fills the gaps in the contact surfaces, increasing the surface area and current flow.

However, any connector, no matter how old, can benefit from the treatment. If the gold surface is already broken or if the connector is not gold-plated (such as older PCBs or connector pairs with male and female pins that are tinned copper) ProGold will keep it from oxidizing and/or corroding.

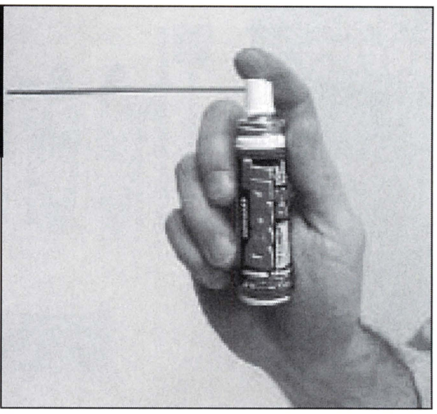
The product can be applied in a variety of ways. CAIG packages ProGold as bottles of solution, aerosol cans, mini-spray cans, pinpoint drop applicators, porus tip pens, syringe dispensers, or premoistened wipes. Depending on the environment, a single application can last from one to 10 years.

Note to all who operate near the water (especially near the ocean): I get a lot of reports of bad connectors and bad battery holders from technicians on both coasts as well as the Gulf States. If I operated in those areas I would make a point of treating all my equipment at the end of this season (meaning right now) to assure reliable operation for the next year.

Other CAIG LABORATORIES Inc. Products

CAIG manufactures a variety of other products. Some are suitable to our industry,. others are not. They have a good, general purpose electrical contact cleaner called DeoxIT. DeoxIT dissolves oxides and sulfides that form on metal contact surfaces, removing these sources of resistance. This restores the contact's integrity and leaves a thin, organic layer that coats and protects the metals. Special additives prevent the dissolved oxides from re-attaching, keeping them in suspension and allowing them to be dispersed easily by the mechanical action of the contact.

CAIG Laboratories' Diane James and Izabella Hauf.



DeoxIT is a general purpose contact cleaner.

DeoxIT works with similar or dissimilar metals. Even when a treated connector mates with an untreated one, DeoxIT will migrate and coat the other surface. When the connectors are separated, DeoxIT will recoat the exposed metal surfaces.

CAIG also manufactures a couple of other products that we use on a regular basis in coin-op. One is an aerosol glass cleaner called OpticALL. Call it Windex with an attitude. It's a general purpose, anti-static glass cleaner. I recommend an anti-static cleaner for video game windows and CRTs, pinball glass, and the glass windows in cranes where the fur can really fly on the freezing cold winter days to come.

Speaking of winter days, pesky problems with static electricity are often better neutralized at the source rather than trying various combinations of grounding, ungrounding, and rubber mats. CAIG makes a product called StaticALL that kills static on floors (and anything else it touches, for that matter). When static becomes a problem, simply spray the carpeting in the area immediately in front of the game. Lightly spray a radius of five feet or so. I have no personal experience with this product so I cannot tell you if it works any better than a couple of capfulls of fabric softener in a pistol grip sprayer full of water when it comes to killing static electricity on carpeting.

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WARNING: FLAMMABLE
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Eliminate those pesky static problems on CRTs, glass and carpets with OpticALL and StaticALL.

Locating thermally-intermittent failures

Another CAIG product is a component chiller called FreezALL. FreezALL cools circuits down to -54 degrees C and comes packaged with a precise one-piece trigger valve and extension tube for controlled application. Naturally, this product contains no CFCs/HCFCs.

CAIG
FreezALL Plus
WARNING:

Isolate thermally -intermittent problems with environmentally-friendly FreezALL.

Here is a repair trick that's worth its weight in gold. Many games fail when they get hot. The game will work fine when it is first turned on in the morning, but after warming up the logic board fails. This type of failure is thermally-intermittent, and you can locate the defective integrated circuit with just two tools: a hair dryer and a can of FreezALL. With the game turned on, use the hair dryer on the hottest setting to heat the integrated circuits on the board. Start with the socketed ICs: the ROMs and RAMs. Practical experience has shown that heat-related logic board failures are caused by the memory devices. Don't be afraid to get them good and hot. You cannot damage an IC with the heat of a normal hair dryer. When you heat the bad IC, the game will fail. This will lead you to the general area of the failure.

To locate the bad IC use the FreezALL. The nozzle comes with a tube that allows you to aim the spray on a single IC. Once you have induced the failure by heating the integrated circuits on the logic board, carefully spray them one at a time with the FreezALL. The FreezALL spray will cool the integrated circuit instantly. If the defective IC works properly when it's cold, the game will suddenly begin to work when it is hit with the cold FreezALL spray. To make absolutely sure that you have isolated the bad IC, try heating and freezing it a few times. Each time you heat it with the hair dryer it should fail. Freezing the IC should cause the computer to regain consciousness.

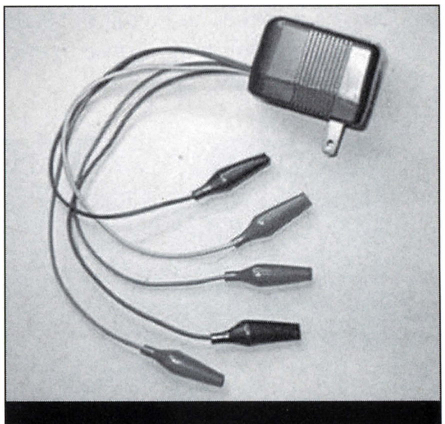
Of course, freezing the bad IC is only a way to locate it. The FreezALL spray does not fix the bad IC. The defective IC must be replaced. This method works for any electronic failure that is thermally-intermittent. The success rate is 100 percent.

For further information, contact CAIG Laboratories Inc., 16744 West Bernardo Drive, San Diego, CA 92127; phone (619) 451-1799; fax: (619) 451-2799; e-mail (caig123@aol.com); or URL (http://www.caig.com).

Building and using a curve tracer

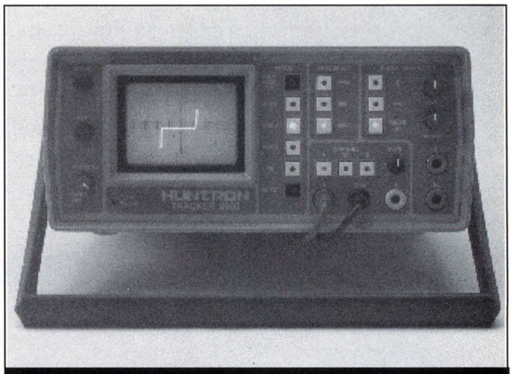
Everyone has his own preferences as far as test equipment is concerned. Personally, I am Mr. Meter. I like to use a digital multimeter for just about everything. I like the meter because I can use it to measure voltages when the power is applied to a circuit, but I can use its "power off" to test components as well.

Some techs love to use an oscilloscope for just about everything. They like to "see" what's happening in a circuit. The oscilloscope gives you a totally accurate picture of the circuit in action (where a meter reading can sometimes be misleading), but it does require power to the circuit under test. This is tough to do if you're looking for a fuse-blowing short somewhere. It also requires you to be able to interpret the display you see on the oscilloscope.



A cheap-and-dirty curve tracer or "octopus"

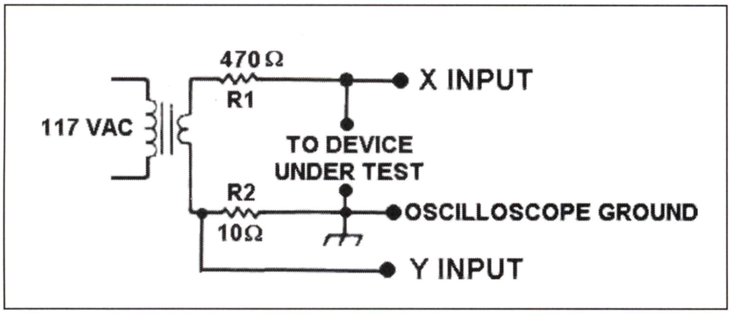
Somewhere between the meter and oscilloscope is a gizmo known as a curve tracer. Another sort of old-fashioned term is octopus. You can see why when you look at the illustration. A typical configuration consists of a small enclosure with a number of leads hanging down as "tentacles." There aren't eight connections, however, so it's a misnomer at the very least.



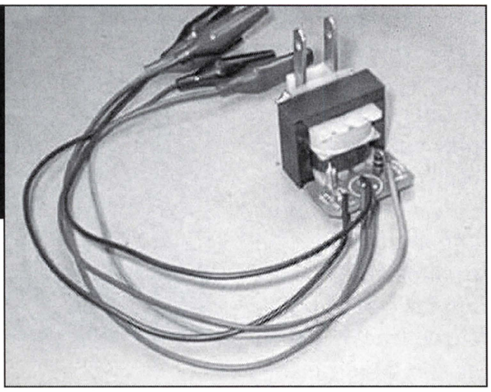
The Huntron Tracker is a commercially available curve tracer.

A curve tracer uses an oscilloscope as a display but allows you to test components with the power turned off. One popular curve tracer is the Huntron Tracker, but if you already own an oscilloscope, you can make your own curve tracer for just about nothing.

The circuit is as simple as can be. It's just two resistors and a low voltage transformer. Anything from 6 to 12 volts will do. I salvaged one from a tiny junk power supply from one of the dozens of small appliances or other gizmos I've purchased and junked over the past decade. You know, the little black boxes that plug into the wall. The one I used



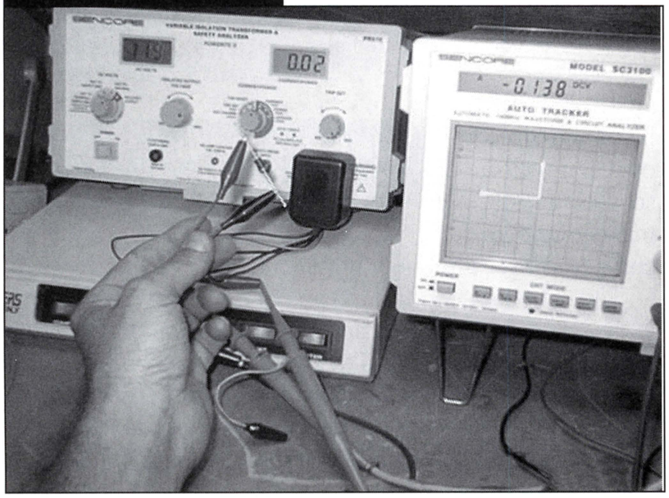
originally had a DC output of 9 volts. To build the curve-tracer, we need an AC output so you must crack the case. I used a hammer and a big slot screwdriver but I'm not big on finesse. You may choose to open the case by sawing it with a hacksaw.

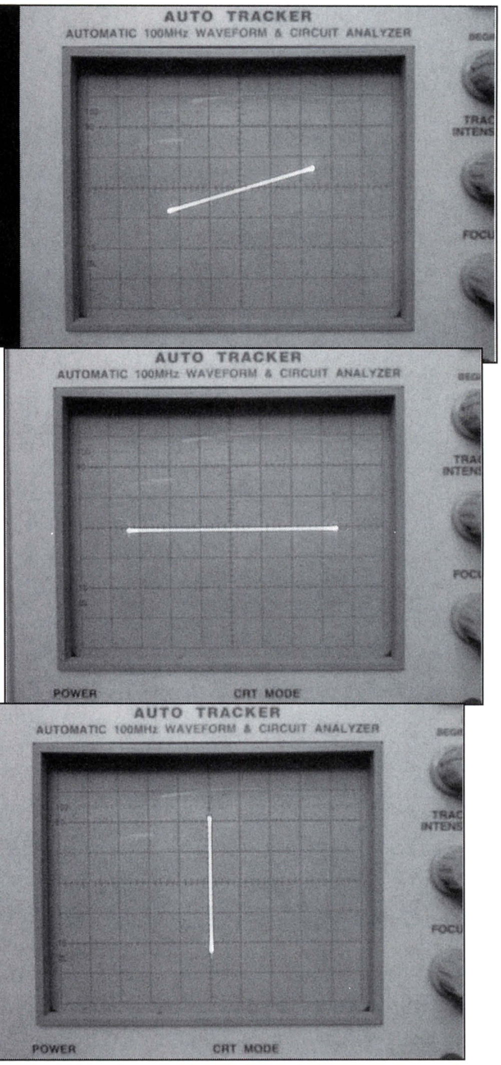


There is a small PCB inside. Use it to mount the resistors and connect the leads.

There is usually a small PCB inside that holds the diodes and the capacitor that change the AC output of the transformer into DC. We don't need these parts but the little PCB makes a handy place to mount the two resistors and attach the other connections. Remove the diodes and capacitor and connect the resistors as shown in the schematic diagram. I'm a "cheap and dirty" technician, so I use clip leads to connect things to test. They're fast, convenient, and inexpensive. In this case, I used clip leads for the connections to the oscilloscope and to the device under test.

Using the curve tracer.





TOP:
Resistor

MIDDLE:
Open Circuit

BOTTOM:
Short Circuit

To use the curve tracer, you must have a dual channel oscilloscope capable of operating in the "XY mode." In the XY mode, one channel is switched from a vertical input (Y) to a horizontal input (X) replacing the normal horizontal timebase generator. For XY operation, the oscilloscope's horizontal timebase circuit is unused.

Now one of the oscilloscope's input, operating normally, will move the beam up and down on the CRT. Positive voltage makes the spot move up. Negative voltage moves the spot down. However, the other input will now move the beam left and right; positive to the right, negative to the left.

To use the curve tracer, set your oscilloscope to the XY mode and adjust the X and Y position controls so the spot is in the dead center of the recticule, the grid on the face of the oscilloscope's CRT display. Connect the curve tracer to the oscilloscope and plug in the transformer. With the two leads for the DUT open (not touching each other or anything else) adjust the X input for as large a trace as you can without going off the sides of the CRT. Short the two DUT leads together and adjust the Y input the same way. Connect the device under test and you'll see something like the illustrations below. What you see will depend upon the type of component and it's condition.

What the heck am I looking at?

The curve tracer displays a graph of voltage versus current. Voltage is displayed in the horizontal direction, current in the vertical. As AC current passes through the two resistors and the device under test, R1 acts to limit the current passing through the device. The input voltage to the device under test is taken off after R1 and passed to the X axis. R2 creates a voltage drop that is proportional to the

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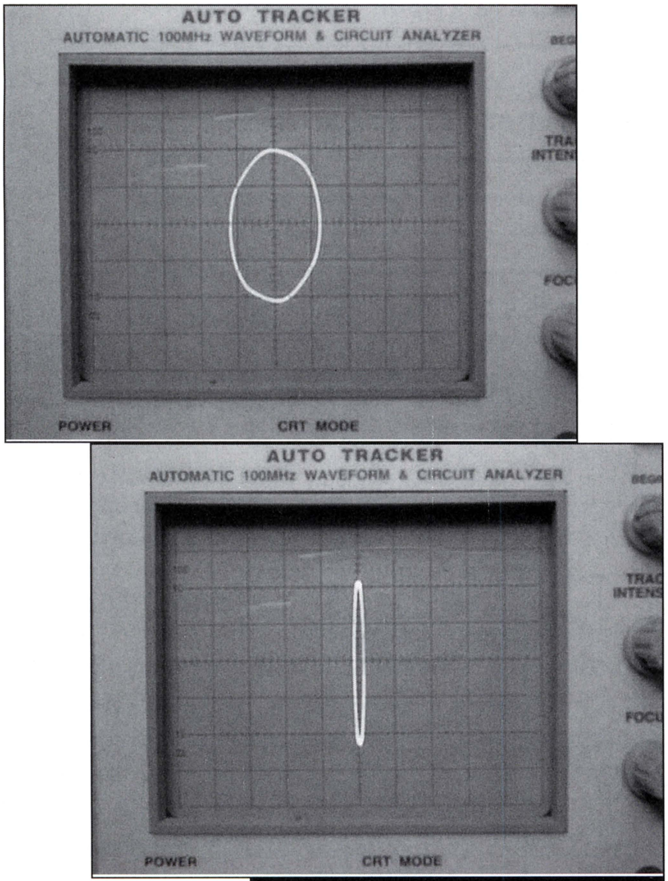
Randy Fromm's Arcade School 1944 Falmouth Dr. El Cajon, CA 92020-2827 TEL 619.593.6131 FAX 619.593.6132 current flowing through the device (V=IR) and passes that along to the Y axis.

What you see then is a sort of graphic representation of what the component does depending on the voltage applied to it. Resistors, for example, are "linear." That is to say, the current is directly proportional to the voltage. The resulting graph for a resistor is a straight line. Hey! That's why it's called linear!!! The lower the value in ohms, the closer to vertical the line is. An open resistor would show just a horizontal line.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CRT MODE
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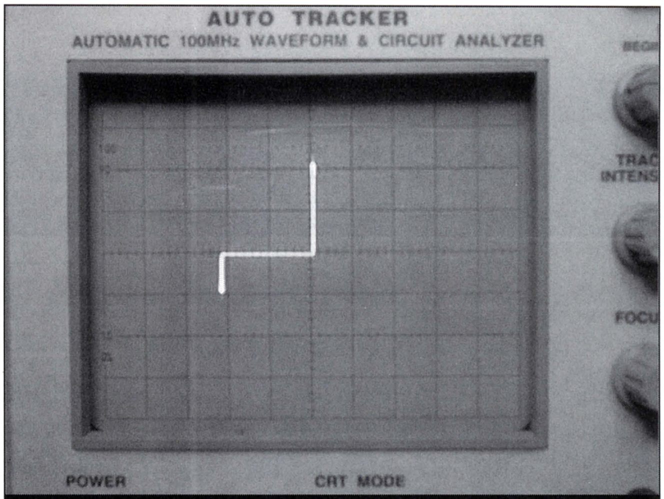
POWER
CRT MODE

TOP: Microfarad Capacitor
BOTTOM: 100 Microfarad Capacitor

Capacitors show an interesting graph. It's an ellipse. The shape of the ellipse depends on the value of the capacitor. A 10 microfarad capacitor produces an almost circular display, while a 100 microfarad produces a much narrower ellipse. Note that the narrow ellipse is centered on the vertical.

When a capacitor fails, it has been my experience that the ellipse often becomes tilted at an angle approaching 45 degrees or, at times, becomes completely open, producing a horizontal line. This type of interpretation is very subjective and, in my opinion, requires much more experience than using a hand-held capacitor meter or the cap meter built-in to a digital multimeter such as the Fluke model 11.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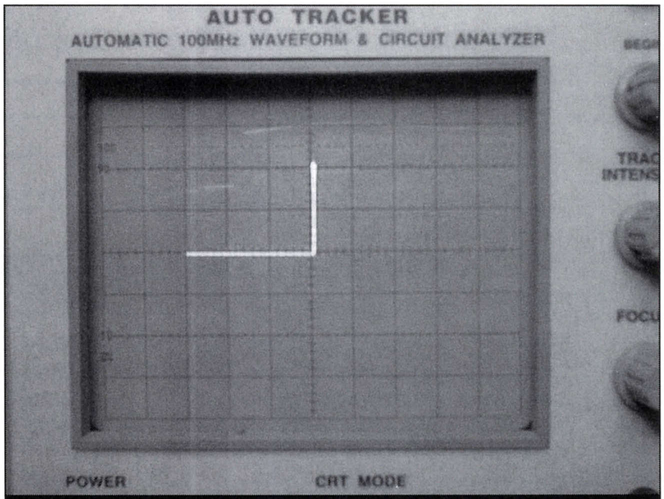
Base-to-Emitter Junction of an NPN Transistor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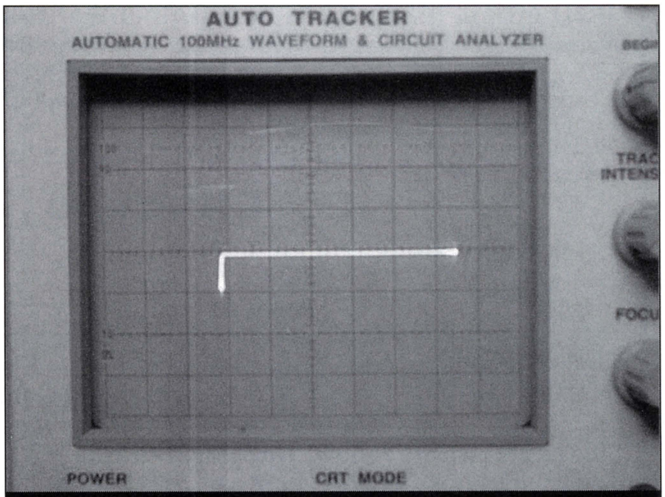
Base-to-Collector Junction of an NPN Transistor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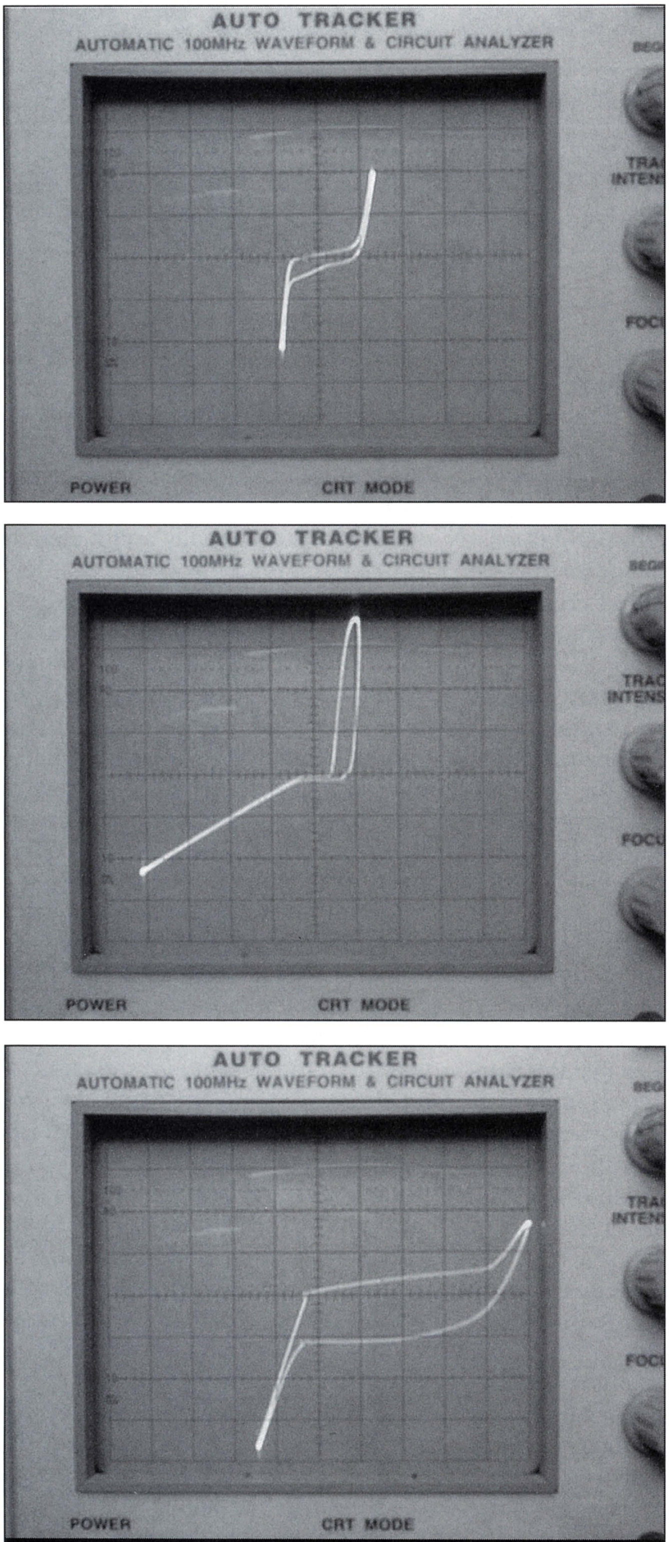
POWER
CRT MODE

Collector-to-Emitter Junction of an NPN Transistor

It is with the semiconductors that the curve tracer excels. Normally, we use a meter set to the "diode test" to test diodes, transistors, voltage regulators, and integrated circuits. The meter will unambiguously test the vast majority of semiconductors but every now and then a transistor will test "good" with a meter but break down when it's operating at full voltage and current. The curve tracer is better at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AUTOMATIC 100MHz WAVEFORM & CIRCUIT ANALYZER
POWER
CRT MODE
AUTO TRACKER
AUTOMATIC 100MHz WAVEFORM & CIRCUIT ANALYZER
POWER
CRT MODE

Integrated circuits and other components can be tested in-circuit, producing signatures such as these.

identifying this type of unusual problem.

As an added bonus, the curve tracer can be used to identify which lead is which in any transistor and tell you if it's NPN or PNP (PNP junctions will be inverted from the NPN graphs shown here.) With a digital multimeter, it's easy to identify which lead is the base but it's impossible to identify the collector and emitter. Both the base-to-emitter juction and the base-to-collector junction give the same reading. The curve tracer, however, makes it obvious.

The curve tracer can also be used to test all types of integrated circuits (including the analog integrated circuits found in monitors) through a technique known as "analog signature analysis." Simply put, the curve tracer is connected to the chassis ground on one side, and each pin of the IC is probed in turn by the other input. A unique visual signature is produced for each pin that is a combination of all the components connected to that particular node. This troubleshooting technique is best suited for "A-B" comparison where you have a good unit that you can compare to a bad one. Just ground the two together along with the curve tracer and probe the same point on each unit. Any difference between the two is cause for further investigation.

Is the curve tracer for you? I cannot say. I know a slew of technicians that swear by the thing. Some people simply find this type of visual identification much easier than reading a meter. Of course, this is a shop tool, useless in the field unless you have a portable oscilloscope. In my opinion, it's a fun and interesting thing to try, regardless of whether or not you use it on a regular basis.

Don't forget to make plans for the "Technician's Obstacle Course" at the AMOA show this year. Techs will have a chance to gain some valuable technical information as well as real "hands-on" work with a $10,000 suite of Sencore test equipment, giveaways, door-prizes (including some brand-new monitors from Sharp Image and Wells-Gardner and a Fluke meter from PartStar) troubleshooting flowcharts and much more! There is no extra charge for attending so there's no reason not to stop in and say hi.

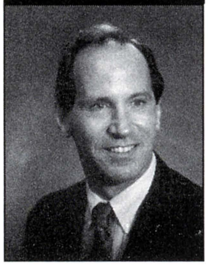
Also, one last reminder that Randy Fromm's Arcade School comes to Chicago, Ill., Nov. 3-7. That's my birthday week so you KNOW it's gonna be a fun class. This year's class is extra special because we will be holding the Arcade School at the Wells-Gardner monitor factory. Naturally, we will tour the plant while we're there.

If you want to learn to repair video games without a lot of technical mumbo-jumbo, then plan to attend this five-day program. The class is designed for working coin-op service personnel who are familiar with games but no previous electronic training is required to get the most out of the class. It's easy to fix monitors and power supplies!

I will be teaching this five-day tech school. Class begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 4 p.m. each day. Tuition is $650. This includes all textbooks and classroom materials (including a small collection of replacement components). Meals and lodging are not included and are the responsibility of the student.

For more information or to enroll in the class, you can speak to Randy Fromm directly by calling toll-free at (800) 484-9892. When the computer asks for your code, press INFO (4636).

See you at the Arcade School! ▲



Coping with legal FUNDAMENTALISM

Editor's note: This is the first in a two-part series of articles that will attempt to draw some conclusions about what is and what is not acceptable equipment from the standpoint of law enforcement and the courts. As always, Tom cautions that his columns should be read as commentary and not legal advice.

TOM FRICKE

There are some states that permit redemption amusement with just a little skill and a prize limit. Others prohibit redemption altogether, (if you want to be guided by the text of the law), but the prohibition is so unpopular that everybody ignores it, especially the police. In yet other states (too few unfortunately) amusement redemption is regulated. But in most states, skill must predominate for a redemption amusement game to be lawful. How does the manufacturer design equipment to this vague requirement? How does the operator select equipment to comply with it?

General guidance in this area can have but limited value. In the final analysis, each machine must be measured against the law of each state. It is necessary as well to check the ordinances of every municipality for general prohibitions (which may or may not themselves be lawful) or specific requirements. Then you have to assess the vague guidance of the state's statutes in the context of whatever controversies happen to have been reported in opinions of the courts of appeals of the state and the attitude of law enforcement to the game, or to redemption games in general, if known. Due to the lack of regulations, the situation exists in many states where:

- The statutes give only general guidance
- The courts have not spoken.
- The judgments necessary to evaluate the legality of redemption games are subjective in nature.
- Law enforcement lacks the sophistication to make these judgments and/or does not consider that its duties include advising citizens, but only in prosecuting those believed to be breaking the law.

In sum, we operate redemption games at our peril. How can we survive in such an absurd legal environment? There are a few common denominators among the laws of the various states which, when taken together, permit us to operate skill-dominant redemption games with at least some degree of confidence that we are not breaking the law and could successfully defend against any allegations that we are doing so.

The wording of the statutes varies from state to state. Many states permit the operation of prize-awarding amusement machines if the outcome of play is determined by the skill of the player and not by elements of chance operating through the working of the machines. Other jurisdictions impose a slightly more restrictive standard: that a redemption game is unlawful if the outcome is determined by any material element of chance, or by any element of chance. I believe that the practical result of these two standards is about the same: if an element of chance produces or determines wins in a redemption game or tends to do so, all of the time or some of the time, it predominates.

For this grouping of states, it is my belief they should be so demonstrably skill-dominant as to address not only the technicalities of the law, but the technical and practical concerns of law enforcement. In determining standards for the evaluation of redemption games in one of these states, it is often necessary to go beyond the letter of the states and the jurisprudence interpreting and analyzing that statute and to consider:

(1) As a composite, what principles have been established by the courts of all jurisdictions that have similar laws, concerning gambling devices in general, amusement machines in general, and the specific amusement machine we are evaluating, and

2) How is dominance of skill or chance proved?

Commonly, the case law available for reference with respect to the first question is substantially antiquated. It is, however, the only available reference both for us and for law enforcement. More importantly, our limited experience has been that law enforcement tends to rely on these antiquated authorities, and, when doing so to interpret them literally—a form, perhaps, of legal fundamentalism. This reality forces us to evaluate our machines in the same light, because for us to operate, they must not only be skill dominant, but must also be acceptable to law enforcement. At least, an analysis of the response of the courts of all of the states that require a predominance of skill permits some generalizations helpful to the design and selection of redemption equipment, with a view toward a good faith effort to avoid violating vague criminal law.

(a) Average player: The game must not be too difficult for the average player. One obvious way to demonstrate skill-predominance in a redemption game is to present successful play. If this must be shown by a player who has spent thousands of hours practicing on the game over a period of years it is not probative in court. Rather, it must be shown that the kind of person who is likely to play the machine can, with reasonable application to the problem, learn to score and win consistently. This principle was most clearly enunciated in the 1957 Arizona case of Boes v. Bartell. The case involved a digger-type claw amusement machine, and is one of only three or four decisions of the courts of any jurisdiction in which there appears substantial technical discussion of skill-chance issues in this type of game. In this decision the Supreme Court of Arizona explained that a demonstration of skillful play by the developer of the machine, who had several years of experience with it, was not persuasive because the demonstrator was not an "average player." This case and others which have cited it or pursued the same analysis did not say that a game has to be easy. It only said that demonstrations in court by those who practiced on the merchandiser machine involved in the case for an extremely long time are not considered persuasive because such a machine is used for the amusement of the public, not as someone's career. Although not articulated as such by the court in this case, the average player touchstone makes sense because one would not expect the average player to elect to play a redemption game machine by chance if it was clearly too difficult to master in the amount of time the public normally allocates to playing amusement devices. (The best example of a machine which can be beyond the skill of the average player is the skill-stop, where the moving wheels or decks of cards can be stopped at any time but can also be set to move so rapidly that almost any normal person would never expect to select the stopping point he wanted by sight, by timing, or by any other characteristic of human endeavor.) The courts have never attempted to describe the average player to establish parameters as to how much practice takes a person out of the category of the average player, or what degree of success must be available to the average player.

As usual, some law enforcement officials have, in my own experience and that of others, shown a strong tendency toward legal fundamentalism in their application of this concept. I am sure that I am not the only one to fault law enforcement's tendency to take the average player rule to refer to any foreseeable player or to a player who makes only a very few attempts to win the game. (For example, the attorney general of California in a published opinion once arbitrarily established parameters of 1,000 plays and a 50 percent win rate for amusement machines.) The basic concept does at least appeal to common sense: an ordinary person should, in our opinion, be able to play a redemption game with some predictable success after practice and application. A game which is so exceedingly difficult that few can play it with success is in danger of being considered a gambling device for that reason alone.

(b)Retrievability of prizes: The cases uniformly hold that no prize may be displayed within a merchandiser if there is incompatibility between the prize and the retrieval mechanism or if due to the location of the prize with respect to the retrieval mechanism, it is impossible to retrieve the prize except in random instances. This rule also appeals to common sense, for the player

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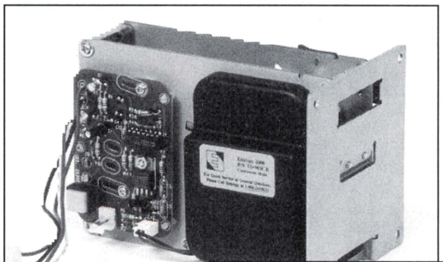

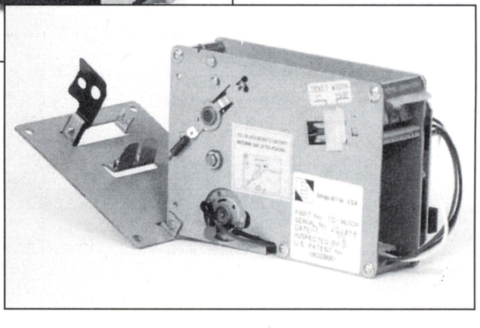

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has the right to assume that displayed prizes are there to be won. If they look like they can be won, but in fact cannot, and the player can only ascertain this, if at all, by a certain amount of trial and error, there is a problem. The player's trial and error plays have, in fact, been games of chance since he could neither affect nor predict their outcome.

I believe that the law does not prohibit display prizes in merchandisers. Neither does it prohibit a mix of retrievable and unretrievable prizes, so long as the display, fairly evaluated, does not tend to deceive the player. To the contrary, I believe that if a machine contains any prizes which cannot be won, the player must have a good reason to understand this clearly before he plays and the machine must also contain a majority of prizes that can be won. After all, there is a skill in identifying the retrievable prizes from a field which includes a mixture of retrievable and unretrievable prizes.

(c)Nature of control by the player: Ideally, the machine must provide to the player the opportunity to exert continuous effective control for the entire duration of the game. This means both:

- The control mechanism must be precise enough to do the job, given ideal input by the player. (For example, if the same push of a button causes a pusher arm to move one inch sometimes and one and one-half inches the next, and if the difference is both material to the outcome and unpredictable by the player, this is an element of chance which would likely be held predominant), and
- If the player controls only part of the play sequence, and the machine does the remaining part, any failure which occurs during the automatic portion of the sequence will be presumed to be due to randomness of the machine's operation, and, therefore, a risk of being deemed a predominance of chance. Variation in function during the automatic portion of the machine's play sequence should be permissible, in our view, if it can be shown that they are not material to the outcome. However, the tendency of law enforcement to literal application of the maxims from the antiquated case authorities is to be found here too. The policeman will more readily accept a game where there is no break in the player's opportunities for actual, full, and effective control of play. Where this is impractical due to the nature of the machine or game, it is clear that as to this attitude of law enforcement, the more continuous and effective the control, or appearance of control, the more acceptable the game.

(d) Hazards caused by the machine: If the machine's function intervenes in the process of play at any point so as to frustrate the effect of the player's skill and input, (to "spoil his shot," so to speak) or change the results of play from that which was set up by the player's input, the outcome of play is at risk of being viewed as produced by chance. Here are some examples:

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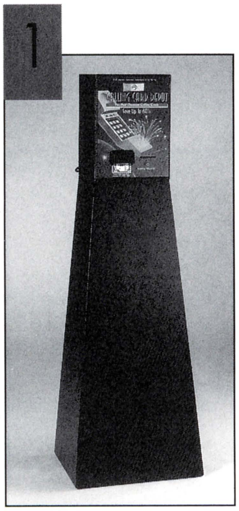

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(1) Rough spots or bumps on the end of the ramp on a bowling game, which cause the ball to bounce unpredictably after it has been bowled by the player

(2) Claw of a crane amusement game suspended from the crane only by a wire, so that it may oscillate unpredictably when the crane comes to a sudden stop and the claw descends on the target prize during part of the automatic play cycle of the machine

(3) Prize deflector on a rotary merchandiser so set that prizes moved by the pusher arm will normally be pushed into the prize deflector and not into the delivery chute

(4) Voltage to the solenoid of the claw mechanism of a crane amusement machine fluctuates when the crane's motor stops and starts. The claw grasps when the motors are stopped with just sufficient force to lift the target prize. When the crane's motors start again, the resulting drain of current from the claw solenoid causes the grasping force to decrease and produces a dropped prize.

In addition to the above generalization, there are a number of other indicators which we have seen utilized to infer predominance of chance in cases where there is little or no direct evidence on either side of the chance-predominance issue, no evidence of actual payoffs, and the testimony presented to the court merely described the machine and how it operates, and perhaps, explains that the arresting officer played the machine a few times with no success or only limited success. The most illuminating and well-articulated set of inferences is that established by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. The case has been cited by many other states' courts as persuasive authority to identify which of these features enable a court to infer unlawful gambling when there is no direct evidence that any gambling actually took place. It held that taken as a whole the particular coin-operated games before it were gambling devices per se without any evidence of how they were used, because they included the following features:

(1) The machines operated entirely by chance with no element of skill involved over the outcome.

(2) The denomination of coins used to activate the machines could be varied by the owner.

(3) Free games could be canceled by the machines.

(4) The machines contained meters to calculate the number of free games canceled.

(5) The owner of the machines could adjust the machines to increase or decrease the player's chance of winning.

(6) The machines could be easily converted into actual coin payout machines.

(7) The machines were complete within themselves and neither the player nor any action the player might take could determine whether or not free games were won.

(8) The machines permitted the player to hold a part of a previous play to be used in the next game.

(9) The period required to play the game was extremely short.

I have cited the above indicators of per se gambling as an example of a court's willingness to infer where there is no direct evidence. None of these features is expressly prohibited under most states' statutes.

Here again, law enforcement displays its tendency toward legal fundamentalism, stating as the law, individual features taken out of context of the precedents which establish them as "things to be considered in an all facts and circumstances" analysis, and presenting them to the operator and sometimes even legislatures as features that are prohibited all by themselves. In fact, in the jurisdiction I am talking about, that require a predominance of skill and provide no regulation, in the absence of a statute it cannot be said to be law that:

- A very brief playing time indicates gambling.
- A very low win rate indicates gambling.
- A great disparity between the cost on one play and the value of the prize indicates gambling.
- Adjustability of the machine to enable the owner to produce any desired win rate indicates gambling if the adjustable features do not increase or decrease the chance elements provided by the machine, but only the legitimate difficulty of play.

Contrary to the above, it is my view that according to substantially all of the jurisprudence of gambling devices in such jurisdictions, a difficult and clearly skill-dominant machine in which play is completed quickly, which has adjustable features, and which dispenses high-value prizes to those few players good enough to win, may yet be a lawful skill game because it plays by skill and not by chance. However, you must cope with the reality of the legal fundamentalism of law enforcement and thus accept that for peace of mind, a machine where the playing time is not brief (the longer the better), where customers win with recognizable frequency, when the prize value is only a small multiple of the cost of one play, and with few, if any adjustable features, is much more likely to be accepted by law enforcement agencies without a great deal of persuasion.

It is common knowledge that gambling device prohibitions in the kinds of states that I am talking about are selectively enforced. Why so? These laws are unpopular, vague, require significant enforcement resources to obtain convictions, often enough carry penalties that indicate to the police officer that the enforcement is not worth the effort, and, in most instances, involve a practice that does no harm. The law creates a situation where the police officer will not tell you what you are allowed to do in the usual case. When the police officer does tell you, he often gets it wrong. Endeavoring to cooperate with the police officer and to make sense of a nonsense law is the burden of our business. It would be better to change the law, of course. Until that day comes, we have but to do our best to comply. However, the court room is the acid test of compliance. In the second part of this series next month, I will begin discussing how the imponderable issue of skill predominance in an amusement game may be presented cogently in court. ▲

TICKET TECH

Don't the **LITTLE** things count ?

Last month Vic focused his column on customer service and the impression your attendants make on your customers. This time he had a few things to add about making sure that your staff is as eager to please your customers as you are.

I admit it, I'm picky. When I go to a family fun center I expect the games to be working. I expect the staff to welcome me with a smile and thank me for making a food purchase at the snack bar. Too bad this seldom happens.

Maximizing the value of your customers' entertainment dollars while at the same time trying to maximize your profits is no simple task. That's why it's so ironic that some of the most important things you can do for your customer are free. After my column last month, I found some things I think are important to your location. They may go without saying, but then they may just go if we don't talk about them.

A smile for instance. How basic can you get? A smile is a friendly gesture, one everyone worldwide will recognize and react to. That smile on the faces of your staff members is a universal greeting making people–we're talking about your customers here–feel welcomed.

A cheerful thank you said to a customer when he purchases food from your snack bar or redeems tickets at your counter works wonders toward making him feel good. You must always remember and instill that thought into your staff that you are there for the customer. The customer is NOT there for you! You may have heard the expression, "The customer is always right." Well, let's just rephrase that to say "The customer always THINKS he's right!"

You may win the battle in convincing him he may not be right, but you'll lose the war when he doesn't come back. It's quite a choice, isn't it?

You'll only provide bad service to a customer once because after that chances are he won't be back to give you another chance to make that first good impression. Provide cut-rate service and your customers will view your location as a cut-rate place. They'll certainly think twice about coming back.

Why do you think Wal-Mart has a greeter at the front entrance of each store? It's a way to say "Welcome, we're glad you're here." In addition to bidding customers welcome with a sincere, friendly smile, the greeter helps customers get a basket, directs them to what they need, or answers other questions.

You're probably thinking that having a greeter is out of the question for a family fun center. Is it really? Could it be worth consideration, especially on a busy Saturday? Sure, you can't count the dollars the greeter or great customer service adds to your bottom line, but you can bet that customers who feel welcome and important will feel good about coming back.

Your staff members are your ambassadors. They are representatives when you can't be there to take care of your customers. Attitude is everything–both yours and your employees. Say a staff member has a fight with his main squeeze. You should be passionate about the problem, showing genuine concern. You must weave your expectations about that employee's attitude while at work into your concern. If you feel the employee is too overwrought to work, send him home or put him doing something that doesn't involve schmoozing with your customers.

Your employees must project a positive attitude toward all customers and you must project a positive attitude toward your employees as well. Customers can sense a bad attitude and your employees can too. That's the worst thing. Your staff is taking a lesson from you all the time. Your positive, encouraging attitude will rub off and you'll see the difference in how your customers are treated by your staff. You treat your people well, they'll treat your customers the same way. It's a tough situation to be in, but it's your business and it should reflect your own attitude.

The way your staff looks affects customer service. What do you do if one of your staff parties until 5 a.m. that morning and comes to work at 9? There is no way he is going to be able to provide good service. But how you handle the situation is important. First, it seems more likely that the employee would simply not show up or may call in sick. That's another story. But he shows up and looks like something the cat dragged in. Do you scream at him "Get out of here you bum!" Or do you bite your tongue, take him into your office, and explain in understanding tones that you will not accept this type of behavior. Under no circumstances should you reprimand any employee in front of other employees or customers. No one is perfect, especially youngsters with different priorities. Give it some thought.

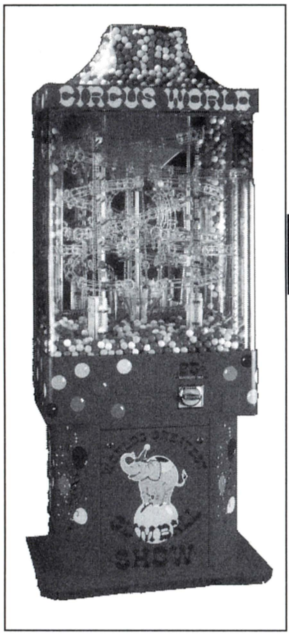
If two customers get bad service from that partied-out staff member, they will tell three other families how bad the service is at your center. They, in turn, will tell their friends. Soon you'll have a lot of people talking about your inferior customer service. Bad news travels fast! We tout word-of-mouth as the best advertisement, but as you can see, it can also be your worst enemy.

When you train your staff, let them know that you are ready, willing, and able to work with them to solve any conflicts that may occur. Emphasize how important it is for them to say "welcome" and "thank you" for every transaction, whether it's at the snack bar or when a family buys some outdoor attractions tickets. Train your staff to smile and project a positive attitude. At the same time, encourage them to come to you when there's a problem. You're in the driver's seat. Don't take the wrong road. Make it fun to work. If your staff is having fun then your customers will too!

If you have comments about this article, I can be reached at (760) 322-4000 or at my Web site (http://members.aol.com/ticketvic). ▲

TICKET VIC FORTENBACH

WHAT'S NEW



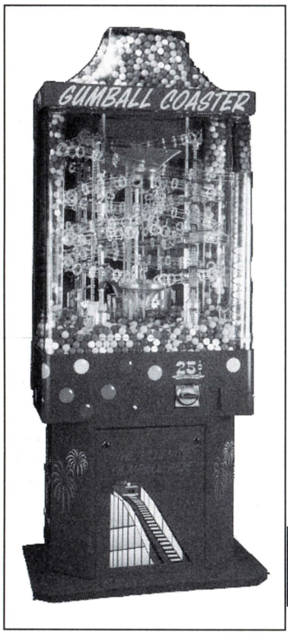
CIRCUS WORLD

After years of working on prototype equipment, O.K. Mfg. presents the newest addition to its bulk vending line, a kinetic electronic gumball machine. The unit comes in two different styles: the *Gumball Coaster* and *Circus World.*

The machines are sure to be a big hit when the young customers see gumballs moving down four different tracks, causing a Ferris wheel to turn, swirling around, traversing a pachinko sideshow, and then magically vended right into their hands.

Features include changeable music and graphics, multivend functions, 110V power, and capacity for anywhere from 850 to 1,080 gumballs depending on the size. Dimensions are 32" wide x 21-1/2" deep x 85" high.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact O.K Mfg., 2340 S. 900 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84119; (800)748-5480 or (801)974-9116; fax (801)974-5458.



GUMBALL COASTER

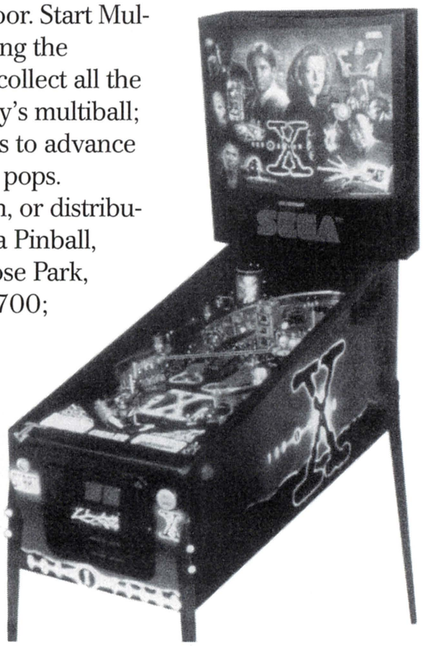
THE X-FILES

Sega Pinball has once again teamed up with 20th Century Fox for its most recent pinball release, *The X-Files,* which offers paranormal surprises, exciting ramp shots, and unique hidden passages as well as high-quality prop replicas on the playfield including Erlenmeyer Flask (Alien Baby), The Host (Flukeman), and Mulder's Filecabinet which descends into play action.

Features include a four-color art package, digital sound, music from the television series, and the Sega Showcase backbox. The rules of the game are easy to understand, attracting the novice yet holding the interest of the expert player.

Players compete either as Scully or Mulder and experience actual X-File case studies by entering the hidden trapdoor. Start Mulder's multiball by entering the descending filecabinet; collect all the flashing Xs to start Scully's multiball; and shoot the orbit shots to advance the Alien Baby to super pops.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Sega Pinball, 1990 Janice Ave., Melrose Park, IL 60160; (708)345-7700; fax (708)345-7718.

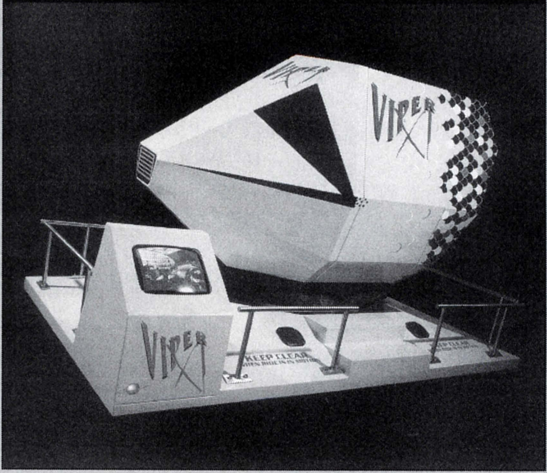


VIPER XI

Worldwide Leisure Corp. of Great Britain has granted exclusive North America distributorship and manufacturing rights of its Viper XI interactive 3-D flight simulator to Astro Distributing.

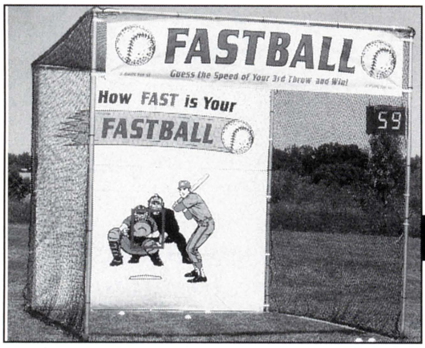
Combining the best in 3-D computing and full 360-degree interactive motion, the Viper XI is a single seat, fully enclosed capsule. Players view game action on a single large format video monitor and control both graphics and motion with an aviation-style joystick.

The Diamond Stealth 3-D sound system completes the fully-immersed experience. Additionally, waiting customers share in the gaming experience through an external sound system and color monitor. Each game offers networking capabilities for multiplayer participation.



Viper XI requires no operator or attendant and is a fully automated stand-alone unit, which accepts coins, tokens, bills, or swipe cards, and has a six-month warranty.

For more information, contact Astro Distributing, P.O. Box 3442, Rock Island, IL 61204; (800)797-7066 or (309)786-7066; fax (309)786-7067; e-mail (asstroman@aol.com); Web site (http://www.AstroGame.com).



FASTBALL

Radar Sales announced the launch last month at Fun Expo of *Fastball,* an indoor, coin-op version of the popular midway game *Radar Fast Pitch.* Delivery of the game is set for early next year.

The company, which makes Stalker high-tech radar guns, has incorporated the latest in digital, audio, and radar gun technology into this skill-based game.

The object of the game is to throw a ball into the strike zone as fast as possible. Up to six balls are dispensed at a time. The fastest speed and number of strikes receives the highest score. Bold LED digits display the speed of the ball.

Players can compete against themselves or each other to beat the best game of the day. A voice response features compliments or antagonizes the player, providing motivation to continue play. Optional features include ticket redemption and a coin or bill dispenser.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Radar Sales, 5640 International Parkway, Minneapolis, MN 55428; (612)533-1100; fax (612)533-1400.

TubeWORKS has announced plans to unveil a new line of active-motion air-powered figures at IAAPA `97. PerformAir action inflatables provide planners and designers a cost-effective large-scale entertainment and design medium, according to the company.

PeformAirs represent a paradigm shift in inflatable design. Instead of pumping air into a static non-moving figure, high-powered air systems allow the air to enter the bottom of the figure and pass directly through the top. Interior aerodynamics result in an air figure that is structurally rigid, yet able to move like the wind.

The PeformAirs are created using the highest quality environment-proof fabric. All stitching is done by machine ensuring durability. Almost any pattern or design imaginable can be constructed using the new method.

For more information, contact TubeWORKS, 26500 W. Agoura Road, Suite 411, Calabasas, CA 91302; (800)962-2556 or (818)879-2386; fax (818)879-2388; e-mail (tubeworks@tubeworks.com); Web site (http://www.tubeworks.com).

GIANT INFLATABLE FIGURES

Operators, get ready to make way for Carousel's new *Smokey Bear Truck* kiddie ride, which is officially licensed from the U.S. Park Service and will help bring and important safety message to young riders.

The message delivered by the audio chip discusses fire safety and prevention. Surveys indicate that 71 percent of kids, 96 percent of teenagers, and 91 percent of adults recognize the serious yet approachable bear.

The *Smokey Bear Truck* has flashing headlights and tail lights and a deluxe LED lighted dash. On the side of the jeep are colorful decals with Smokey's face while different fire safety messages are displayed on the side of the truck.

For more information, or distributor referral, contact Carousel International, P.O. Box 307, Eldon, MO 65026; (573)392-7122; fax (573)392-7125.

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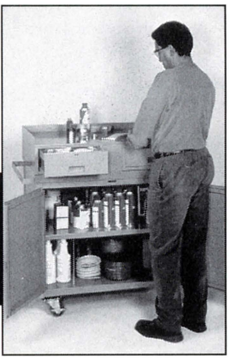
Dual swinging doors with a key lock enclose the roomy storage compartment. A tubular steel handle aids maneuverability on 3-1/2" Dyna Tred casters. Dimensions are 36" wide x 42-9/16" high x 24" deep. The bench comes in dove gray, although the all-steel components are also available in putty, wedgwood blue, and ash.

For more information, contact Targeted Marketing, 48 W. Galena Blvd, Aurora, IL 60506; (630)892-2232; fax (630)892-2232. ▲



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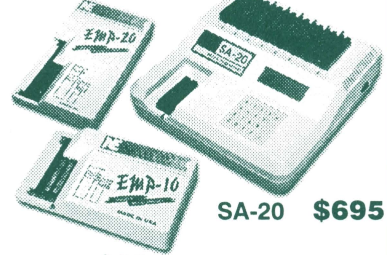

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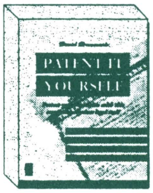

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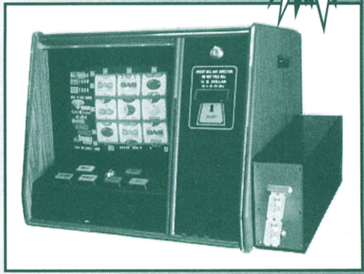

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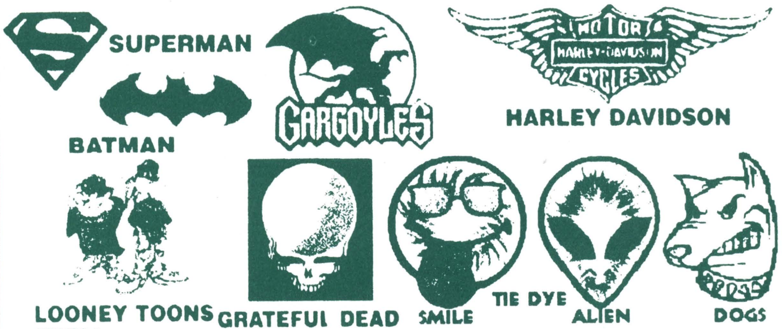

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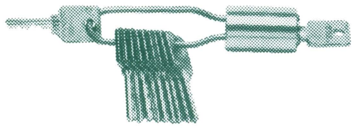

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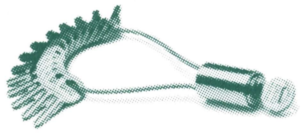

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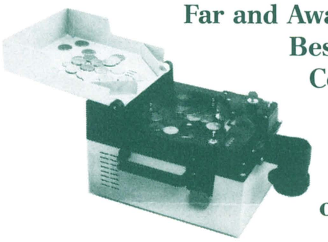

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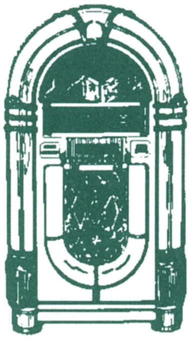

October

11th	18th
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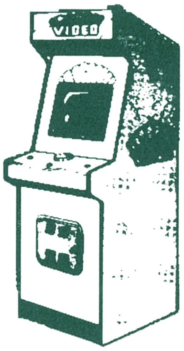
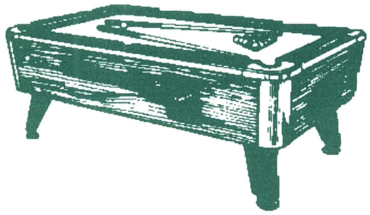


November

1st	8th	15th	22th	29th	29th
Indianapolis, IN Our Land Pavilion Indiana State Fairgrounds, 1202 East 38th Street Cellular: 317-432-7626 At Reorder Tone Dial: 502-551-1866	**Columbus, OH** Buckeye Building, Ohio State Fairgrounds 17th Avenue & I-71, Exit 111 Cellular: 614-271-7626 At Reorder Tone Dial: 502-551-1866	Collector's Auctions **Chicago, IL** **Ramada Inn - O'Hare** 6600 N. Manhiem Road, Rosemont, IL *7th Annual Pinhead Collector's Auction in association with Pinball Expo '97.* Attendance information contact: Rob Berk at 1-800-323-3547 A 10% Buyers Premium will be applied.	**Kansas City, KS** Wyandotte Co. Fairgrounds 1405 North 98th Street *For information call* **Tom Rhoades** at 515-774-8424	**Des Moines, IA** University and E. 30th St. Iowa State Fairgrounds *For information call* **Tom Rhoades** at 515-774-8424	**Pennsauken, NJ** South Jersey Expo Center, 2323 Route 73 *For information call* **Rob** at 609-729-5371

January - 1998



3rd	24th
Pennsauken, NJ South Jersey Expo Center, 2323 Route 73 *For information call* **Rob** at 609-729-5371	**Indianapolis, IN** Our Land Pavilion Indiana State Fairgrounds, 1202 East 38th Street Cellular: 317-432-7626 At Reorder Tone Dial: 502-551-1866

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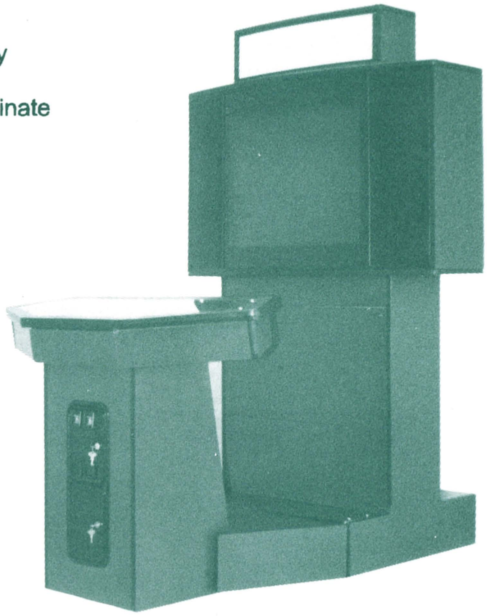

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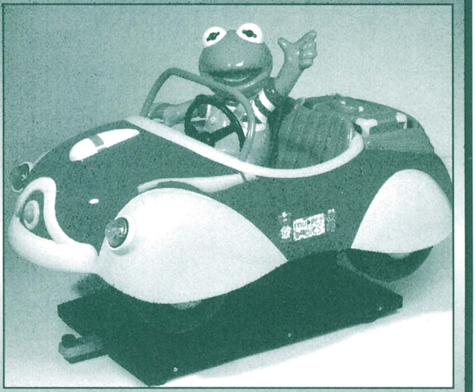

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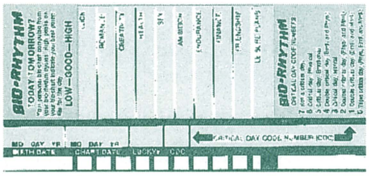

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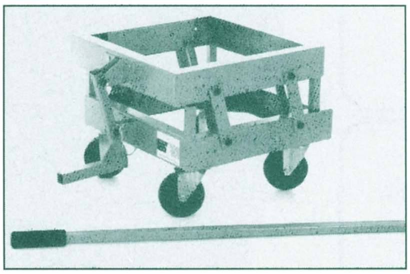

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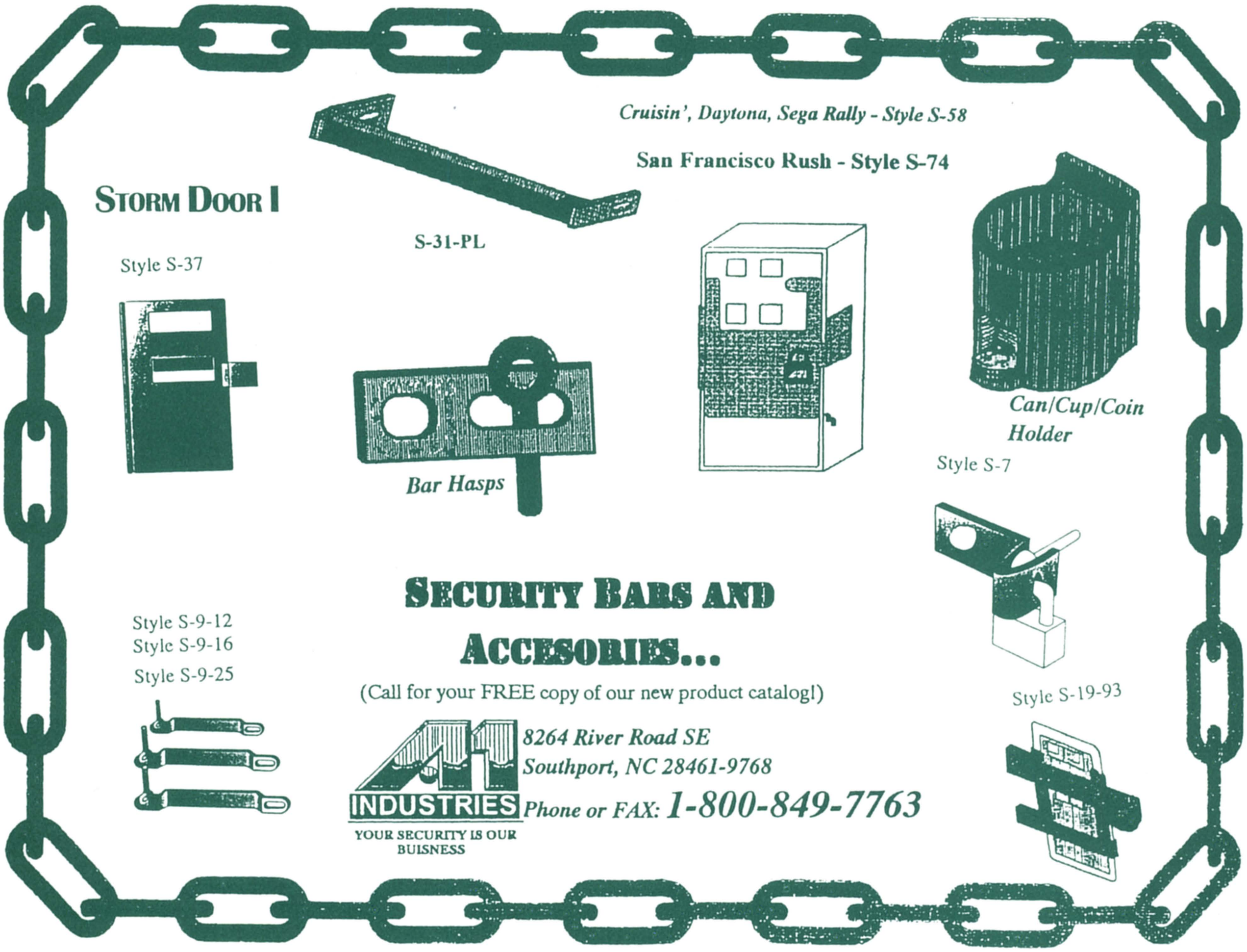

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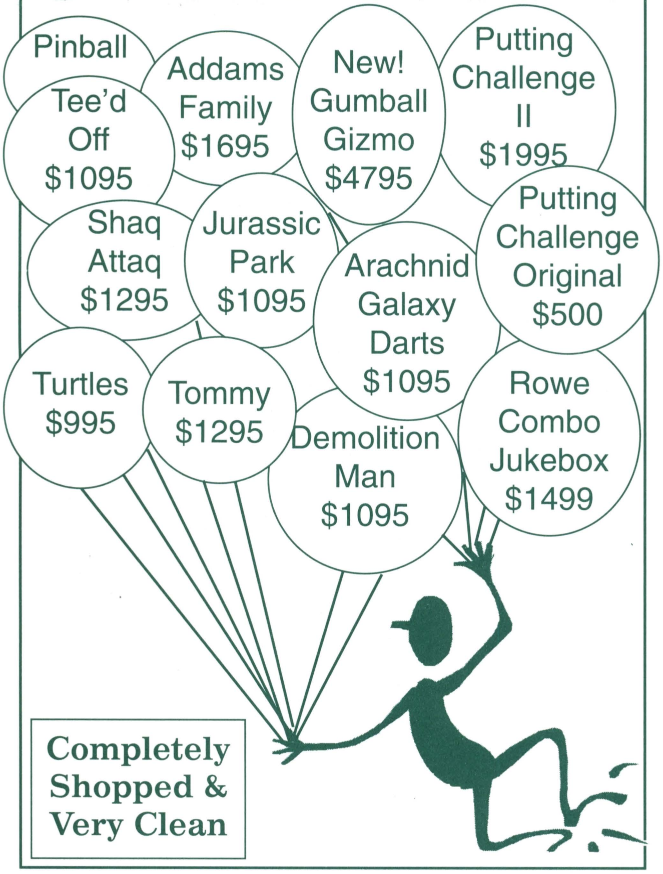

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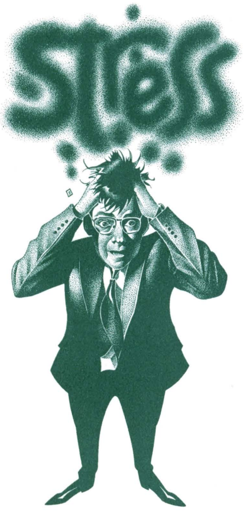

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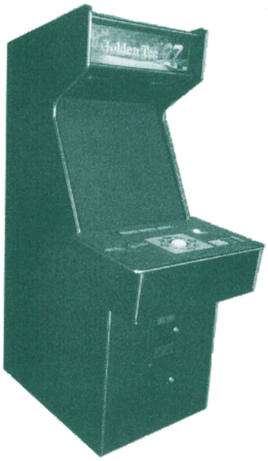

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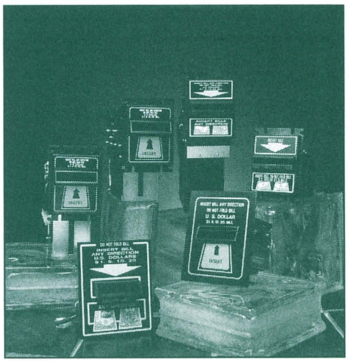

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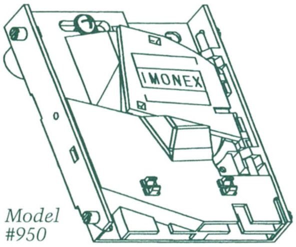

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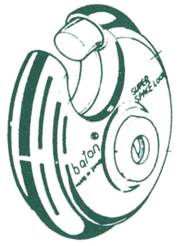

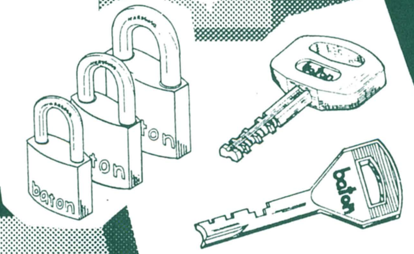

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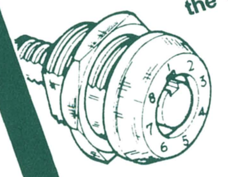

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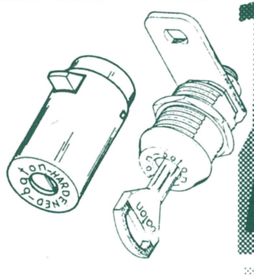

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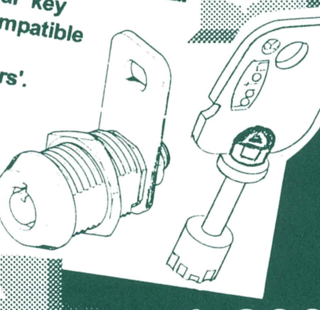

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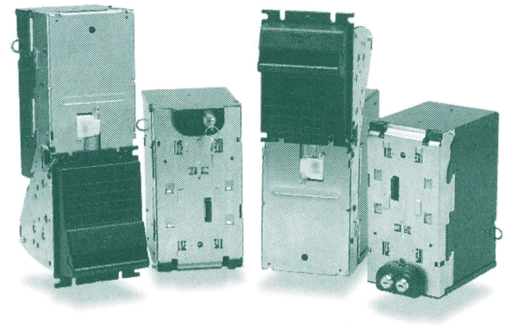

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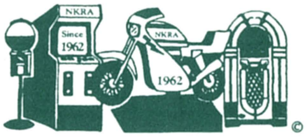

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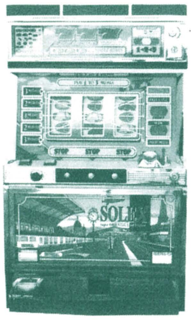

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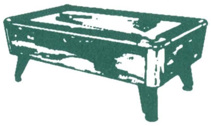

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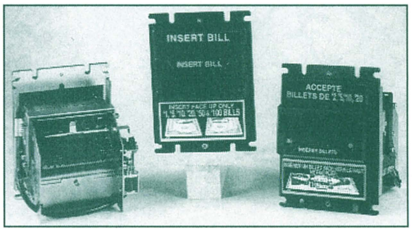

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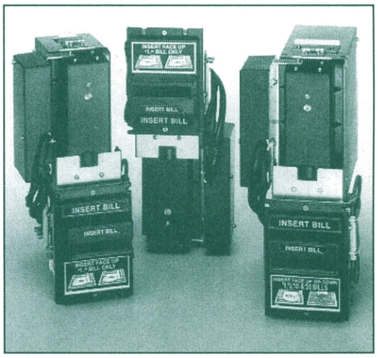

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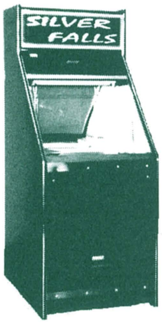

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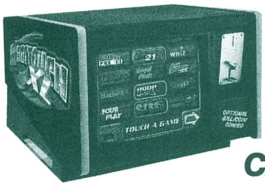

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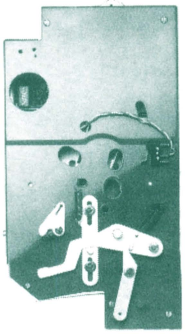

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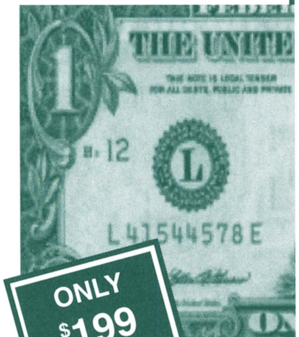

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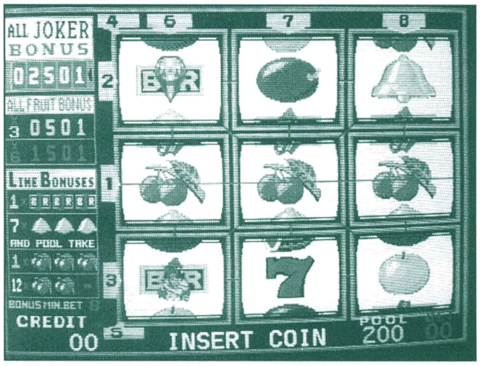
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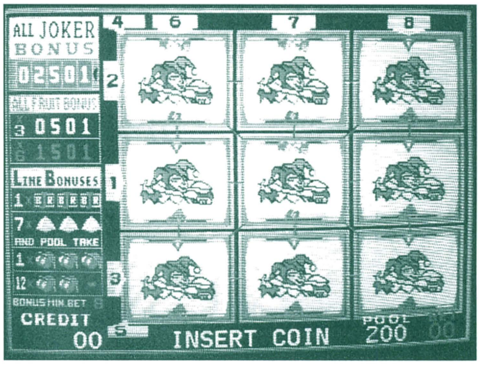
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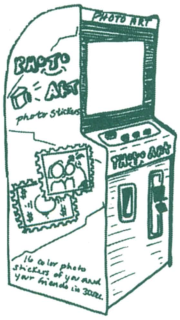
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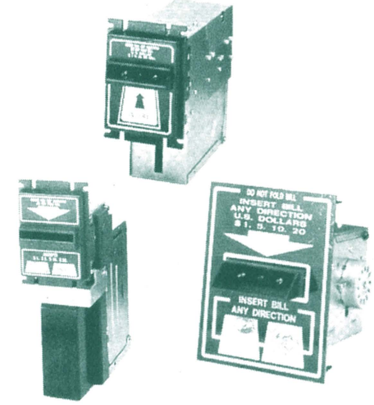
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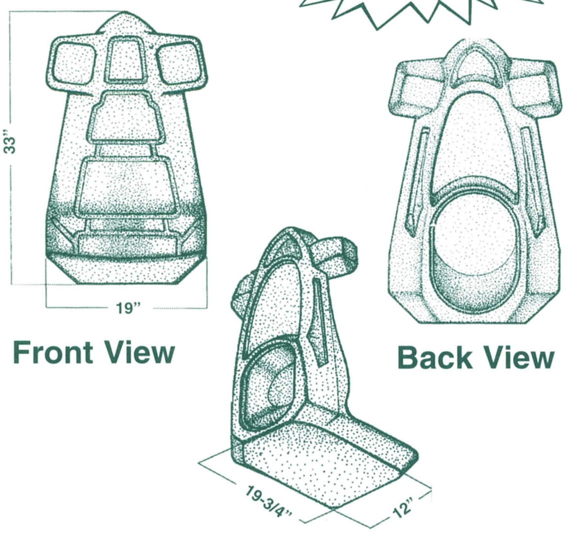

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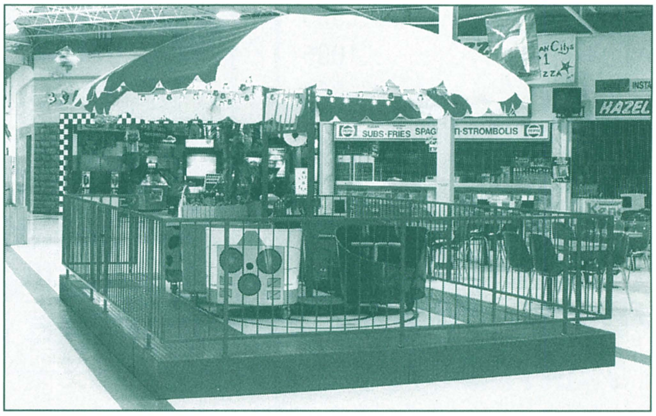

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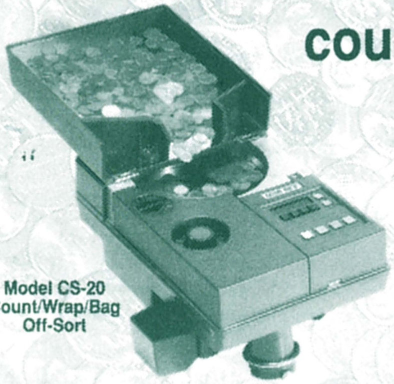

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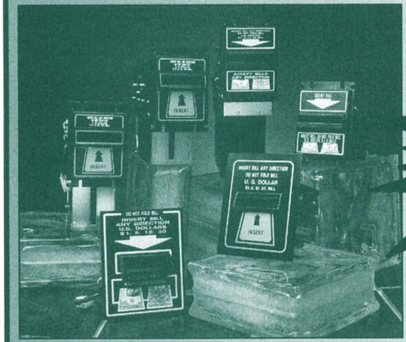

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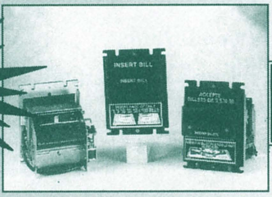

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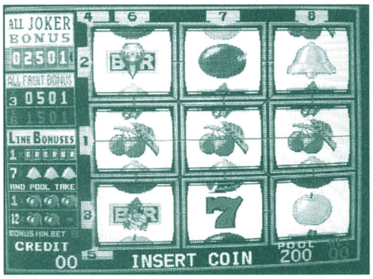
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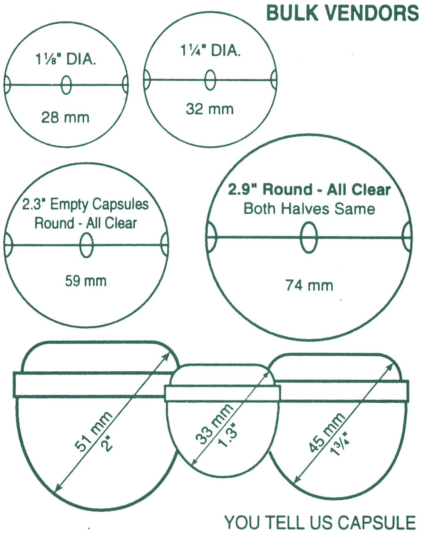
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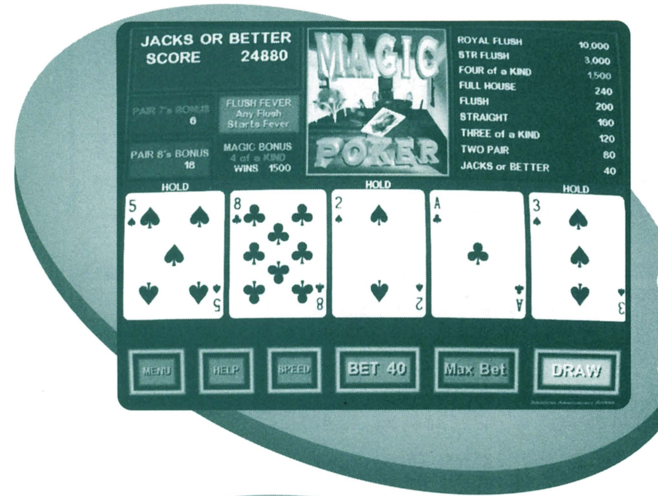
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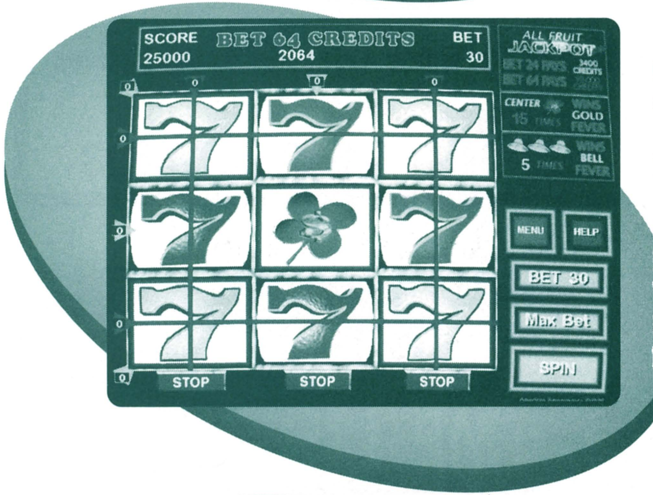
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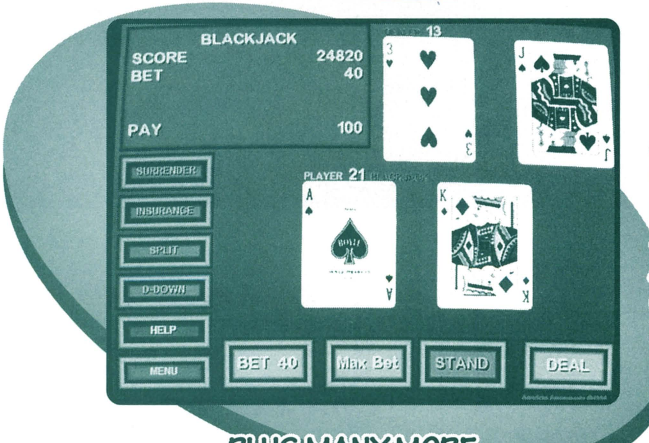
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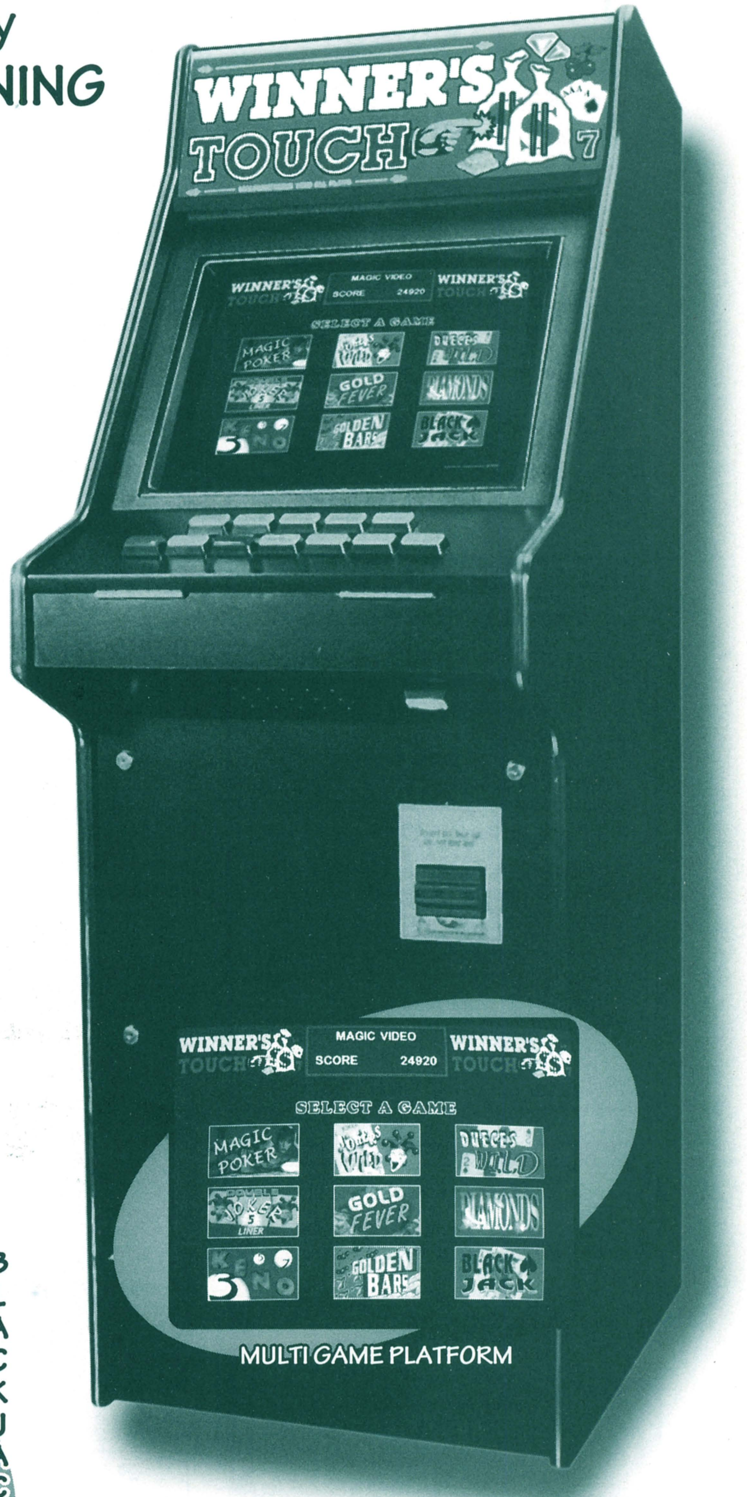
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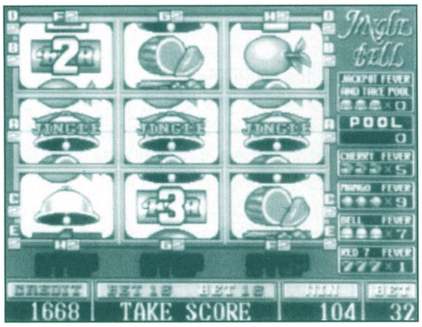
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JACKPOT FEVER AND TAKE POOL
POOL
0
CHERRY FEVER
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WIN
104
BET
32

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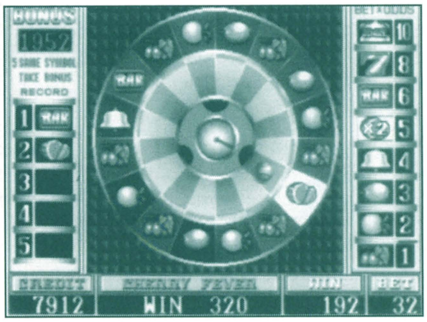
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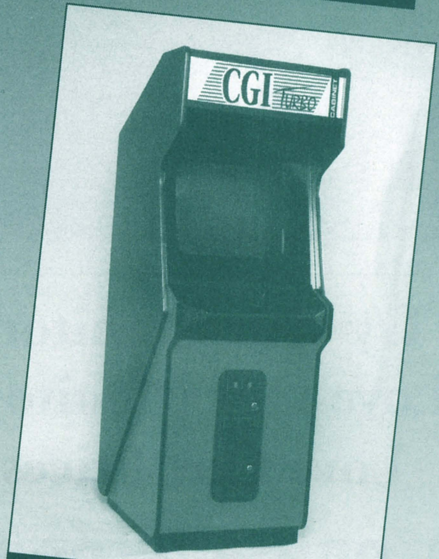

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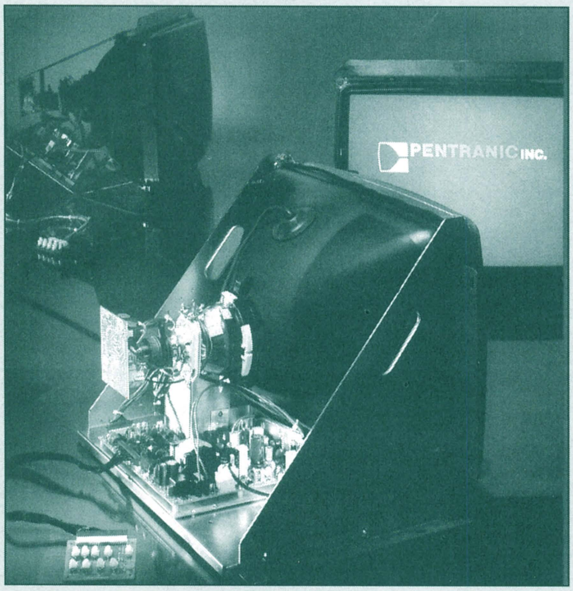

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October 5-7

National Association of Convenience Stores Expo, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla. Call (703)684-3600; fax (703)836-4564.

October 5-8

North American Gaming Regulators Association Fall Conference, Denver, Colo. (402)474-4261; fax (402)474-2426.

October 10-15

World Waterpark Association 17th Annual Show, San Antonio, Texas. Call (913)599-0300; fax (913)599-0520.

October 14-16

World Gaming Congress & Expo, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev. Call Andrea Schatz, (212)594-4120, ext. 232; fax (212)714-0514.

October 16-18

National Automatic Merchandising Association National Convention and Trade Show, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla. Call (312)346-0370; fax (312)704-4140.

October 23-25

AMOA International Expo, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, Ga. Call (312)245-1020; fax (312)245-1085.

October 28-30

Amusement Industry Expo '97, I-X Center, Cleveland, Ohio, Call (800)870-EXPO (3956); fax (216)265-2621.

October 30-November 1

AMOA-National Dart Association 4th Annual Singles & Doubles International Championships, Radisson Hotel, St. Paul, Minn. Call (800)808-9884; fax (317)387-0999.

November 6-8

West Virginia Music & Vending Association Convention, Ramada Inn, S. Charleston, W.Va. Call (304)744-4741; fax (304)744-4525.

November 18-22

79th International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions Convention and Trade Show, Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla. Call (703)836-4800; fax (703)836-4801.

For overseas events see "International Scene" (pg. 58).

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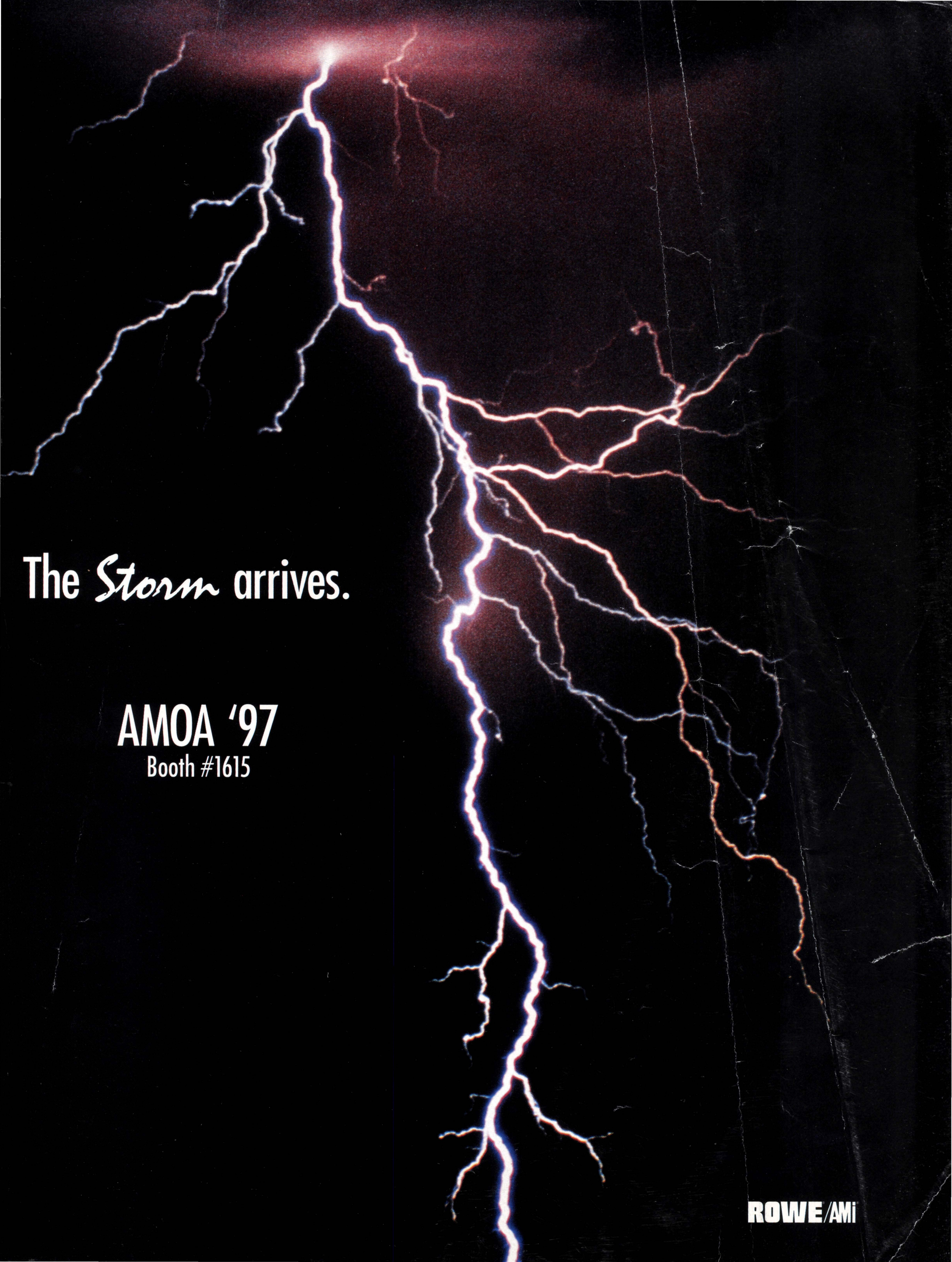

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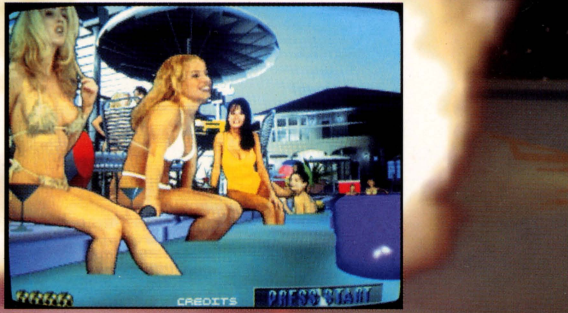

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